

BYBURY TO BEACON STREET

MRS. A. M. DIAZ

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Mrs Wheeland

I wish you a
Merry Christmas and a happy
& prosperous New Year

Your Friend

Mrs Baumann

510 Lane St



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BYBURY
TO
BEACON STREET

BY
MRS A M DIAZ

Author of

Domestic Problems
The Cats' Arabian Nights
Polly Cologne
The John Spicer Lectures
William Henry Letters
and others

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I.

THE NATURAL WAY.

FRIEND SOLOMON:

Can you not, seeing that you are named for a wise man, suggest some wise plan for helping us through the winter? We are a small neighborhood, wedged in among the hills, with many long evenings in prospect. These evenings might be made profitable, in the best sense of the word, if we only knew how to make them so. What I should like would be to bring the people together occasionally; but, when we are brought together, what shall we do? And whether the older ones will let themselves be brought together or not is a question, as some of them are shy of anything which savors of improvement. I have mentioned the subject once or twice, but with indifferent success.

“I know what ’tis owin’ to, Cap’n Jerome,” said Parson Chandler the other day, speaking in his usual solemn manner, “’tis all owin’ to your bein’ an old bachelor, that you expect to reg’late things, and make ’em do right. An old bachelor is self-adjustin’, so to speak. He can reg’late his affairs to suit himself. He can spend his money on books, and his time in perusin’ ’em. But if ever you should come to be a married man, Cap’n Jerome, you’ll find there must be victuals to eat and clothes to wear. And it isn’t doin’ a woman a deed o’ kindness to tell her to neglect her work, and ease off her cookin’ and go here and go there. What’s the use of all this reformation? Folks have settled down into regular habits; and ’tis best to let things go on in the natural way.”

Parson Chandler is no more a parson than I am a captain. We are both of us plain working men. He gets his title from his unwavering gravity of demeanor. I can only account for mine by the fact of my having been, perhaps, rather overzealous in attempting to reform certain habits of living which prevail in Bybury, and by my subscribing to so many periodicals as to be accused, behind my back, of putting on airs. Reformers do sometimes make themselves ridiculous by their

officiousness; but I have never been able to discern this quality in my own efforts, all of which have seemed to me warranted by the circumstances and by common sense.

The closing sentence of Parson Chandler's address is one with which I have become exceedingly familiar—"the natural way." Let me attack, ever so mildly, any habit or routine, and I am sure to encounter this phrase, used in one shape or another. Some people set it up as a wall of defence; others seem to consider it a final, knock-down argument, and hurl it at me with a kind of "now-you're-done-for" air, as if no reasoning could stand that blow.

The aggravating mixture of solemnity and decision in Parson Chandler's utterance caused me to jot down certain remarks on the habits of the neighborhood, just for the sake of considering whether these habits are or are not in accordance with the "natural way."

Remark first: Generally speaking, every available moment is spent in physical labor. "So tired." The expression is so much used that the meaning has almost gone out of it.

Remark second: Too little sociability. Several families have "feelings" toward each other, which

"feelings" would probably die out were the families to meet oftener and have more interests in common.

Remark third: Too marked a division between the older and younger people.

Remark fourth: Not much progression. The mental faculties are not being sufficiently developed. As proof, I give, word for word, a conversation which recently took place in my hearing, and which almost exactly resembles the conversations I used to hear, among my aunts and grandmothers, forty years ago.

(Conversation).—"Do you think he'll marry the widow?"

"He'll stan' in his own light if he does."

"Some think they'll both stan' in their own lights."

"She needs a home."

"And he needs a housekeeper."

"They say she's worth a little somethin'."

(Doubtfully.) "May be so. I don't trouble myself about other folks's matters. She might have had somethin'; but she's one o' that kind it don't take 'em long to run through a property."

"Well, for my part, I'm willin' they should

suit themselves; and I've been told 'tis quite pleasin' to her folks."

"How is it with his folks?"

"Hem!—Now don't tell this from me; but I have heard 'twasn't quite so pleasin'. You know she's sort of unfacultied,—no calculation; don't know when to put her potatoes in the pot, as the old sayin' is."

"She holds her age pretty well."

"Yes, middlin' well. She's a good deal beholden to dress, though."

"I think, myself, she's too old to wear flowers in her bonnet."

"That was a handsome cloak she had on last Sunday."

"Yes; I noticed that cloak. Do you think she had it given to her, or bought it right out?"

"I don't know; but some folks say she'd take extra pains with her looks at this particular time, if it took her last cent."

"I suppose she's aware he has his failin's."

"Anything in particular?"

"Why, didn't you ever hear? But maybe 'tis only on extra occasions."

"You don't mean to say he's ever overcome with liquor?"

“ Well, I have heard it hinted. Sam Knowles’s wife told me that at their barn-raisin’ — now don’t tell of this from me, for she didn’t want it mentioned,” —

“ Oh ! I shouldn’t think of mentioning it.”

“ Well, Sam Knowles’s wife told me that at their barn-raisin’, the other day, he was just about how fares ye.” [End of conversation.]

Remark fifth : Too little mirth. The greater part of the elder people are, so to speak, in a state of perpetual gravity. With them, a serious face is a satisfactory endorsement of its owner. To be grave is to be good. Fun is, in some cases, excusable, never commendable. Their joining in a simple game, or witnessing an entertainment, for the avowed purpose of being amused, would be considered, by themselves, as improper, if not actually sinful. If surprised into a laugh, the laugh is commonly atoned for by superadded dolefulness, and by the countenance taking on a sort of apologetic expression, the idea being that laughter is something foreign to the real purposes of life.

II.

A TALK AT THE HARTMANS.

FRIEND SOLOMON:

Consult the women about this plan of mine? I believe you are right. They might, as you say, make suggestions which masculine slowness would not think of. The only wonder is how your masculine slowness ever conceived so bright an idea. As to "the materials which Bybury offers to work with," we have Parson Chandler—otherwise Mr. Jason Chandler—and his wife, and various other staid, elderly, hard-working people, married and unmarried. For liveliness, we have a dozen or more of young Byburyites, who occasionally gather together, by themselves; and we have, also, some lively ones among the "betwixt and between," as certain individuals are called, who seem too old to keep company with the young folks, and too young to settle down for old folks. And we have certainly one lively one in Miss 'Cinda [Lucinda]

Potter, who though an old maid of—I dare not say how many years, does the biggest part of what there is done to keep life in the place. For common sense and general information, I must mention, in an especial manner, this same Miss 'Cinda and her sister Mary Ann, nearly as old as herself, and the Alderson family. For industry, integrity, and natural kind-heartedness, we have a pretty good share of the whole population. This natural kind-heartedness has been damaged, in some instances, by certain gossipy habits which would be given up, I am sure, if the people could be made interested in subjects worth talking about.

Miss 'Cindy, Mary Ann and myself stepped in to see Allen Hartman and his wife, that evening, and laid before them our plan, the two ladies, of course, doing the chief of the talking; because they had brighter thoughts than I had and a handier use of words. I, for one, never feel like making flings at womankind on account of their glibness, but, on the contrary, have a sense of thankfulness that there is a force among us which has the power to work up some of my own feelings into thoughts, and then put the thoughts into words.

“Mr. Mundy thinks,” said Mary Ann that evening, “that, as we are a little nest of people shut

in here for the winter, we should make the most of ourselves and of each other."

"That has a sensible sound," said Allen, but how shall we do it?"

"Why, Mr. Mundy thinks," said Mary Ann, "that the neighbors should meet together of an evening, say once a week, or once a fortnight."

"For fun?" Allen asked her.

"It won't do to say fun," said Miss 'Cindy. "It won't do to say it. Imagine Mr. 'Parson' Chandler and Mrs. 'Parson' having fun in earnest! But we'll mean fun."

"Call it recreation," said Eunice.

"The grown-up ones won't enlist under any such useless banner," said Miss 'Cindy.

I asked, "Why not say for general entertainment?"

"It strikes me," said Allen, "that you will have to begin with instruction, pure and simple, and enlist us under that banner. The Yankee mind is always willing to be instructed."

"It likes to be amused, too," said Eunice.

"Yes; but the adult Yankee mind of Bybury will not seek its amusement with malice aforethought," said Miss 'Cindy.

"The coming together is of itself a mighty good

thing," said Allen. "Even in this small place there is too great a separation of interests. We have our little rivalries, our jealousies, misunderstandings, fault-findings, hard feelings, and hurt feelings, which keep us apart. We'll come together and rub off the boundary lines."

"Yes," said I, "we must have more in common. We must think together and talk together."

"And laugh together," cried Miss 'Cindy. "People always feel friendly when they are laughing together." "And we might bring up in the conversation," said Mary Ann, "some of the subjects which are so much talked about and written about, nowadays."

"Yes indeed!" I exclaimed, with more earnestness than I intended. "Any subjects which have to do with life and living."

Said Eunice to her husband, "Allen, what makes you look so roguishly at Cap'n 'Jerome, otherwise Mr. Mundy?"

"Because," said Allen, "I suspect otherwise Mr. Mundy of serious views. His talk has been of entertainment. I have no confidence in him. He means to do us good. Entertainment indeed! There'll be matters of importance smuggled in. Mark my word!"

"I should like to ask if fun isn't a matter of importance?" cried Miss 'Cindy.

"Great, very great," said Allen. "It is the lubricating oil which makes life go better. But then, there must be something to go. There must be purposes, motives, actions."

"The worst thing about that house," said Mary Ann, as we came out of the yard, "is, that 'tis a very hard place to get away from."

"I know it," said Miss 'Cindy. "The whole family are so pleasant-spoken, and so wide-awake, so harmonious, too, always on the best terms with each other. How they get hold of so many ideas in this out-of-the-way place, is a wonder!"

"Why, they make it an object to read a little of the best kind of reading, every day," said Mary Ann.

"They seem to be wide awake all over," said I. "They are what may be called whole people."

"Whole people! that's it exactly," said Miss 'Cindy. "I came across a word to-day which just suits them: Equa-responsive. They answer back at whatever point you touch them. Try them with a pitiful story, or a good joke, or a work of charity, or a grand idea, or with anything beautiful among

God's works, no matter whether 'tis a flower, or the blue sea, or a rainbow, and they always have the kind of feeling you want them to have."

"And whole people are not so easy to find," said Mary Ann. "There's Mrs. Brown, one of Uncle Ben's summer boarders. I noticed that she responded upon subjects that had to do with what she called 'society,' and those were about all. I mean the Mrs. Brown that sat with her back to the sunset and counted her stitches."

"There are plenty of people in Bybury," said I, "who will respond only inside the bounds of their every-day work, or every-day tittle-tattle, or the receipt book, or — the fashions." (Yes, fashions, even here!)

And this is true, and these are the very ones who say that Allen and Eunice and Miss 'Cindy and Mary Ann and some others, are bookworms, and are above common things. As to that matter, sometimes I think a person has to do considerable studying to find out that there's nothing low or common in the humblest of God's works. For the general run of us Bybury folks don't make much account of bumble-bees and millers and creeping things, but let a man who has studied into the habits

of these creatures come into the place, and he'll be running after them night and day, and if you wonder at his taking so much interest, he'll tell you that the life of a worm is as hard to account for as the life of an emperor.

III.

GATHERING TOGETHER.

FRIEND SOLOMON :

I am glad to know that you take an interest in our small doings. We call our meetings the "By-bury Gatherings." This name suits us better than "club," or "society," or anything of that sort ; as all we mean to do is to come together in a social way, for fun, and for profit, and for the sake of seeing each other. Even Miss 'Cindy, who is so earnest for fun, agreed that the subject for the first gathering should hold out promise of pretty nearly unmixed profit, as otherwise the serious-minded would hold back. She called me in, one day, as I was going along the road past Eunice Hartman's, and asked me what I thought of "Wickliffe" as the first subject.

"Allen and I have been thinking," said Eunice, "that the facts relating to the life and death of Wickliffe will give the instruction which, you know,

the Yankee mind is always willing and glad to get."

I asked how they would obtain the facts. Eunice said they had a friend in the city who would like to search out facts for them in the encyclopædias, but that, before troubling this friend, she should send Susie, her oldest girl, to see what could be found in the Hamlenton library. Hamlenton is a small town, some six or eight miles from Bybury. A neighbor of Eunice's, — Mrs. Hunt, — who had happened to drop in, with her work, looked up in astonishment, upon hearing Eunice's remark.

"What!" said she; "send Susie all the way to Hambleton just to get a book? Seems to me you put yourself out a good deal."

This shows how differently different people look at things, and how differently they bring up their children to look at things. Now Eunice brings up her children to think that books and ideas and useful information are just what they should put themselves out to get; Mrs. Hunt looks at them as being of small importance, and would give them only the time not wanted for other matters. You will observe that, though not a family man, I take notice how families are being brought up. The truth is, I am keeping a sort of lookout upon people

generally, to see who are getting the most — that is, the best — out of life.

You will want to hear about our first gathering. It proved a greater success, even, than we had hoped. The young people were glad enough to hear a plan which would bring them together occasionally. The grown-up folks held back at first. They were too old, or too busy, or — though they did not say this — too solemn, to stir out from their homes for a purpose which savored, in the least, of frivolity. But human beings, however old, or busy, or solemn, do have a natural liking for each other's society ; and this natural liking, together with our exceedingly proper subject, proved sufficiently "drawing" even for Mr. Parson Chandler and Mrs. Parson, and others who, like them, are on the very shady side of fifty. Most of us Bybury people had ideas, more or less, concerning Wickliffe. Some knew that his ashes were dug up, and thrown into a brook ; many knew that he was connected with the Reformation ; and all of us were willing to have our knowledge of him put into accurate shape, and more added thereunto.

We met at Mr. Jedediah Johnson's, his home being large and central. Mr. Johnson and his wife — Mrs. Elsie — live on a farm. They are hard-

working people, and have with them two hard-working daughters, and a hard-working son, all grown up. Indeed, little Jed, as the son is called, — or sometimes Jeddy, or Jed, — must have got his growth of six feet twenty years ago, at the least calculation. Little Jed is one of what my Brother Sam calls the “snickerin’” kind. He has plenty of fun aboard; but, unless he’s pretty well acquainted with the company, he won’t say anything, but just gets up in a corner, and nudges, and grunts, and makes up faces, and chuckles without showing that he’s chuckling, and talks in undertones. You only know what’s going on by the “snickerin’” in that particular corner. This is just the way it was that night of our meeting. But then Jeddy ’ll work in well enough by and by; for there’s good stuff in him. The schoolmaster was there that night, and two or three people who were visiting in the place. Jeddy’s sisters did their part well; and I may say all the young folks did well. They had been told to appear lively, but not so lively as to cause such people as Mr. Parson and Mrs. Parson to feel out of place. Some of the grown-up ones were sociable and pliable; others took their seats in a stiff, conference-meeting sort of way, which was rather too long in wearing off.

While the people were assembling, Miss 'Cindy said to me, in an undertone, as she passed by, "Something else in common, Mr. Mundy," then glanced very mischievously at the looking-glass. She was alluding to one of my favorite hobbies; namely, that all classes of people — the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the good and the bad — have more in common than is generally thought.

Having my attention thus directed, I was led to observe that the elderly women were as anxious for the becoming arrangement of their scant locks, their bows and their cap-strings, as were the younger ones to get the most telling effects from their crimps, their ringlets, and their "fix-ups," as Mary Ann calls the little ornamental gear of feminine array. Mary Ann's hobby is plainness in dress. Eunice doesn't agree with her; and this subject may come up in our gatherings.

"Have you made a note of it?" Miss 'Cindy asked me, the next time passing.

"O yes!" said I. [MEM.: One thing which women of all ages have in common is that regard for personal appearance which some call vanity.]

"Why do you confine your 'Mem.' to women?" asked Eunice Hartman.

“Because,” said I, “you don’t see the men waiting for a chance at the glass, and crowding around it, and prinking, and tiptoeing, and smoothing their neckties.” •

Miss ‘Cindy laughed as she turned her snapping black eyes towards the kitchen-door. In the porch, on a rusty spike, hung and swung an irregularly-shaped piece of looking-glass, placed there for the benefit of Mr. Johnson and Jeddy, who, when they come in from work, sometimes “prink” before it to the extent of a few dabs with the hair-brush. The brush hangs on another spike. That looking-glass answers its purpose tolerably well, considering its liking to turn round on its string, and that the quicksilver is missing in spots; for both these objections can be overcome by practice in dodging.

Following the direction of Miss ‘Cindy’s sly glance, I noticed that almost every one of the young fellows, before coming in, cast a quick look around, to see if he were observed, then, with some secrecy, drew forth a pocket-comb, stepped towards the hanging glass, touched up his hair, his mustache, his whiskers, and surveyed himself, with anxiety, or with satisfaction, according to the nature of the case.

“Very well,” said I; “I will insert ‘and young men.’”

“You may as well say ‘all people,’” she replied. “There’s Cap’n Zach, nigh upon sixty. Cap’n Zach, as you may see if you look, is not going to present himself until he is satisfied that his bald place is covered, and covered decently. There’s nothing out of the way in this; it is the duty of all to look as well as they can; only please arrange your ‘Mem.’ so as to give your own sex its share of personal vanity.”

“Still,” said I, “you must allow that, generally speaking, men do not look in the looking-glass as often as women. It is not so much an article of necessity to them.”

“Because,” said Miss ‘Cindy, “men have no ribbons, laces, and other flying, frisky, fluttering things to attend to; no crimps, curls, and braids to keep in place. Men’s attire is not easily disarranged. It has fixedness. It is a sort of outside case, which takes him in, and shuts him up; and there he is, good for all day.”

While we were talking, Mary Ann came up.

“Mrs. Lem Hunt and Mrs. Joshua Hunt are quite sociable together,” said she.

“And why not?” asked Eunice.

“Why, quite a while ago,” said Mary Ann, “Sarah Luce — a mischief and dressmaker — told Mrs. Joshua that Mrs. Lem said that Mr. Joshua was a well-meaning man, but would never set the great pond afire; and Mrs. Joshua has had feelings towards Mrs. Lem ever since.”

“But what are they talking about so fast?” asked Eunice.

“Oh! about their children,” said Mary Ann. “Mrs. Joshua is telling what her little Joshua can do, and Mrs. Lem is telling what her little Lem can do.”

“Common ground again, Mr. Mundy,” said Miss ‘Cindy.

“Exactly,” said I; “and quite likely Mrs. Joshua will feel more friendly toward Mrs. Lem for meeting on that common ground.”

“And, feeling more friendly,” said Mary Ann, “she may think of the affront somewhat after this fashion: ‘To be sure, Mr. Joshua is a moderate sort of man; and perhaps he can’t set the great pond afire. If he can’t, Mrs. Lem told the truth. If he can, Mrs. Lem’s saying he can’t won’t hinder him from doing it; and, if worst comes to worst, and I should have to choose between the two, I’d sooner have him well-meaning than to have him

set the great pond afire. And likely as not Mrs. Lem never made that speech out of her own head. Likely as not Sarah Luce asked her if she thought Mr. Joshua would ever set the great pond afire, and she said no.' "

"Do you think," asked Eunice, "that one person can ever really injure another person? I don't mean in the way of reputation, or fortune, or enjoyment; I mean injure the person himself."

"Why, no," said Miss 'Cindy; "of course not. A man is what he is. Saying that he is thus and so does not make him either thus or so."

Mary Ann is firm in the faith that bringing us often together is going to prevent unfriendly feelings, and quench gossip.

IV.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN LUCK?

FRIEND SOLOMON :

Do you believe in luck? We had quite a discussion on the subject last evening. Some of the company were speaking of a relative of Mrs. Jones's, one Hannah Bryant, who moved from Bybury Centre some fifteen years ago. She is a city lady now, keeps her carriage, lives in style, has a son in college, and her daughters have the best of everything, so Eunice told us. Mrs. Chandler remarked that it was wonderful what luck that woman had, and others present expressed similar sentiments. Presently Miss 'Cindy spoke up and asked this question, —

“Was it luck that did it?”

“I had that same thought myself,” said Mrs. Jones; “for I was looking back and bringing to mind just how Hannah Bryant began. She and Lucy Ann Hall were left widows at just about the

same time, and both in poor circumstances. The neighbors helped them, but helped Lucy Ann more, because her children always looked so poverty-stricken. Lucy Ann depended on the neighbors, and if one of the children lacked a garment, waited till the garment came. You didn't catch Hannah Bryant doing that. She had more ambition. Lucy Ann took in sewing, and Hannah took in sewing. One day Hannah said to me, 'I shall never be able to bring up my children and keep my family together in this way. I must try something else.' And what do you think she did? She made up six shirts in the very best manner, borrowed money for travelling expenses — she had a first-rate character for honesty — carried those shirts to the city, and sold them to a man who dealt in gentlemen's wear. He wanted more. She found out from him what was the common price for making one shirt, and at what rate he would pay a person who would take them out by the quantity — that is, take the materials — and guarantee that they would be well made. Of course there was profit in this business, and right enough, for there was responsibility. She got a recommendation of character from the selectmen and the minister, and the shirt-dealer sent her cloth for a few dozen shirts. There were women enough

glad to make them, though this was before the days of sewing machines. Her business increased. She moved from Bybury Centre to Overton, and finally moved into the city. She is a partner, now, in a large gentlemen's furnishing establishment, has money in banks, bonds, stocks, and nobody knows where."

"And how about Lucy Ann?" some one asked.

"Lucy Ann," said Mrs. Jones, "just mulled along, as you may say, earned about half a living and depended on charity for the other half. Her children were taken out of school as soon as they were big enough to earn anything, and put here and there, according as places could be found. They are all poor; and so is Lucy Ann."

"They may take just as much comfort as the Bryant folks," said Mrs. Chandler, after a pause in the conversation.

"Of course they may," said Allen Hartman, "but that is not our question. Our question is, Was Hannah Bryant's success owing to luck?"

"I suppose," said Eunice, "that by luck we mean something outside of ourselves. Now how was it with Mrs. Bryant? In the first place, there was the ambition to keep her family together and to give them advantages. Then, the energy which

led her to strike out a path for herself. There must have been nice sewing on those gussets and bands and seams, and button-holes, or the shirt-dealer wouldn't have liked her work. The shirts afterwards sent in must have been well made and promptly forwarded, or he would not have let her go on. To get such quantities of work done well in every little particular required great care and watchfulness, not to mention the labor of carrying on such a business. Just the shapes of the button-holes, or the stitches round their edges, might have stopped her career in the very beginning."

"Let us make a count of her qualifications," said Miss Hunt, "as given thus far. Ambition, energy, honesty, skill, determination, industry, promptness, faithfulness in details, perseverance — there's no need of going outside of Hannah Bryant to account for Hannah Bryant's success."

Mr. Johnson said, "that for his part he had always noticed that people went up just as high as the power inside of them would take them."

"Yes," said Miss Hunt, "as a general thing we make our own fortunes. Each one carves for himself, or for herself, his or her own niche to stand in. I can see how my scholars make places for

themselves in the estimation of the school, some by their good-heartedness, some by their brightness, some by their truth, some by their untruth, some by their meanness, some by their jollity, and so on."

"I knew a young man," said Allen, "who went into a large dry-goods store, and in a very short time was made head salesman. Some people said, 'What a lucky fellow!' One day I was speaking of this to the proprietors. They said luck had nothing to do with his case, but that he had in him exactly the qualities which make a first-rate salesman. Take notice that they said 'in him.' Business being dull, several of the clerks had been dismissed. One of them — I'll call him Ben — was a particular friend of mine; an honest, steady fellow.

I asked one of the proprietors how they happened to select him to send away. 'Oh,' said he, 'there's no happening in these matters any more than there is luck. In ordinary times we should have kept Ben, but in times like these we keep the ones who are the most valuable to us. Ben did all that was strictly required of him, but nothing more. He never exerted himself for the interests of the firm, and he was particular not to work over hours. As we can't keep all, we spare those who can best

be spared. There are some we can't afford to keep, and some we can't afford to let go.' He said he supposed it would be just the same in a milliner's or a dressmaker's establishment. In dull times the best workers would be surest of staying. 'You know how it is aboard ship in a gale;' said he, 'the least necessary articles are thrown over.' People talk about luck. I don't believe in it."

Mr. Johnson remarked, here, that he knew two men who started in life as lawyers. "One of 'em," said he, "was always on hand. If he promised to meet a man, he did meet him, and at the exact time set; and when he had a case in court, he threw himself into it, body and soul. He stands A number one, and makes money hand over fist. The other one could never be depended upon. He pleased himself, let who would be waiting, and now—he's just about where he was at the beginning; but 'twould take pretty sharp eyesight to see any luck in the matter."

"Eunice and I were saying the other day," said Allen, "that whoever has a good article finds a market for it. A pedler came to our house with extra nice butter. We had butter enough, but bought some of his because it was extra nice. The people in the next house did the same, and for the

same reason. Generally speaking, it is just so with other things. If a painter has a first-rate picture, he can sell it. If a writer has a first-rate poem or essay or story, some publisher will want it. If a carpenter is a first-rate workman, he'll find work plenty. If a professor excels in mathematics or chemistry or philosophy or any other science, some college will be in a hurry to get hold of him. If a man has business talent, and good judgment, and a reputation for uprightness, mercantile establishments will overbid each other to secure him. If a young man has ability, energy, integrity, activity, and industry, some business firm, or some other master-workman, will pay for his services."

"I know a city dressmaker," said Miss 'Cindy, "who is a disagreeable person and charges monstrous prices, but she makes splendid fits, and gets a good deal done, and so everybody wants her. And I heard of a cook, once, who was worth her weight in gold. Seventeen families were trying to get her!"

"Of course," said Eunice, "we find exceptions, rare exceptions; there are backflaws, and there are disappointments, and so forth, but, as a general thing, I agree with Mr. Johnson, that people go up

just as high as the power inside of them will carry them."

"And I agree with you and Allen," said Miss Hunt, "that a good article is sure to be needed. It may be a button, or it may be a poem, or it may be skill, or it may be character."

V.

I CANNOT DIG.

FRIEND SOLOMON:

Our schoolteacher, Miss Hunt, having been asked to read something at one of our gatherings, brought a paper of which I enclose a copy. Perhaps you may like to look it over.

MISS HUNT'S PAPER.

Dear friends, you will find the text of my discourse in the sixteenth chapter of Luke, third verse: "I cannot dig." I think that if a person can say with truth, "I cannot dig," he settles his own case with few words. In pronouncing this short sentence against himself, he fixes his position at the foot of the ladder, and shows reason why he will always remain there. I know that when my oldest brother was in the "doldrums," — that is, when he was trying to choose an occupation, and was drifting this way

and that, with no special wind to blow him in any special direction, — Grandfather Hunt said to him: “Josey, my boy, it doesn’t make much difference which one you pitch upon; the difference is in taking hold. You’ll never get on in any kind of business without you put dig into it.” Grandfather spoke the words with a strong emphasis, and though I was young at the time, they impressed me. Perhaps you will pardon an allusion to myself, and let me say that as I grew older I felt an earnest desire to become a teacher. My father could not then furnish me with the means of preparing myself. Remembering my grandfather’s words, I “put dig into it”; earned enough to pay for part of the necessary preparation, and then, by putting more dig into it, made up the rest by home-study, and I am still digging. It is because grandfather’s advice has been useful to me all my life, that, homely as it is, I wished to repeat it here. I have taken some pains to find out the truth of it. In some cases of great success I had opportunities of looking behind the curtain, and invariably found there hard work, and plenty of it.

One case was that of a man who moved into a large town, and there started a business by which he accumulated a fortune. An inquiry into his

case showed in the beginning poverty, family troubles, struggles with competitors, discouragements, and blackflaws of various kinds; but through all these were shown industry, persistency, faithfulness, promptness, altogether making what my grandfather would have called "dig."

A friend of mine, with a high reputation for teaching several important branches, has been recently chosen professor in a flourishing college. She acquired her reputation by years of persistent, well-directed effort, and, even now, "digs" outside of school-hours. That there is plenty of this to do within those hours, every faithful teacher will bear witness. Another friend of mine is at the head of a prosperous dressmaking establishment. Look back a few years, and you will see that her success is the result of hard work and close attention to details. As was said the other night of Mrs. Bryant, things so small even as button-holes, or the stitches in a seam, might have hindered that success. And, by the way, Mrs. Bryant was a case in which may be seen the true article, the genuine dig. And there are other women like unto her, — "bee" women, "small fruits" women, literary women, scientific women, farming women, flower-raising women; all working for what they get.

I am acquainted with a gentleman who writes remarkably pleasing short stories; stories which read as if they were no work at all, but were written at a sitting of one evening. I asked him if this were so. He laughed, and replied: "I shouldn't like to have it told of, but I allow about a month a story. That 'no work' appearance which you speak of is brought about by work."

A preacher who would interest an audience must put thought—that is, mental labor—into his sermons. He must be closely observant of human affairs, in order to draw from them moral lessons for his hearers; and he must do real hard mind-work in order to present those lessons in forcible language. Then the lawyers. Did you ever see a lawyer poring night and day over pages of legal lore, searching, combining, arranging, wearing himself out physically, and using every faculty of mind to make a forcible argument? For his client, a fortune, or even a life, may hang upon this man's capacity to stand hard work; for himself, his professional reputation and his success in life.

A first-class musical performer sweeps her hands across the keys, and, seemingly without an effort, brings forth sounds which stir your soul within

you. This wonderful power is no mystery to those who know that for years she has spent four, six, eight, and even more hours a day in the drudgery of "practicing."

Dickens said that if he had done anything worthy of commendation it was by persevering labor. Carlyle defines genius as "a transcendent painstaking." When Mr. Everett was complimented on the beauty, weight, conciseness, and finish of a sentence in one of his orations, he replied that the sentence spoken of cost him seven hours' labor. It is said that Buffon rewrote his voluminous work on Natural History seventeen times before he thought it fit for publication. When Sir Joshua Reynolds was asked how long it took him to paint a certain picture, he said, "All my life." And, if we had time to speak of them, there are all the inventors and discoverers, with their separate records of toil and discouragement and persistency. Indeed, I am sure that if we look behind any case of remarkable success we shall find there dig of the hardest kind. We can not get something for nothing.

It may be urged that there are cases in which something is got for nothing, as, for instance, when a large property is received as a direct gift.

Let us consider this. In the first place, the mere fact that a man receives, say a hundred thousand dollars, does not make that man a success. Suppose he keeps his dollars by him and occupies himself with looking at them. This would not make him a success. Neither would it do so if he spent them in sensual gratifications and tasteless magnificence. The moment he begins to use his money worthily and intelligently, labor begins. For, even though he crowd his mansion with pictures and other works of art; with books, scholarly, scientific, æsthetic; still the man himself will not be a success unless the man himself has the learning and the culture to appreciate these, and learning and culture require labor. If he invest his money in business, that certainly demands labor. If he would dispose of it in charity why, this, if intelligently done, involves the labor of inquiry into social problems, of searching out the worthiest objects of that charity, and of the watching to see if it works satisfactorily. To be sure he may hand in the money directly to some benevolent institution, but in this case there would be no reason for calling the man a success, as he would merely have had another person's money in his keeping for a short time — like a contribution box.

The sons and daughters of wealthy families may live easy lives, but not one of those lives can be considered a success unless by it is accomplished something of value, and this something of value cannot be accomplished without individual effort.

Yes, it must come always to this at last — individual effort. One person cannot make another person's success. We must all dig for ourselves, and nobody else can do it for us, and those who "cannot dig" will be failures. Every year thousands of young persons begin the study of music, of drawing, or of some one of the various branches of knowledge; every year thousands of young persons, more especially young men, choose some employment with which to start themselves in life. Comparatively few of this youthful host meet with any marked degree of success. Yet probably not one of those who fail, if asked the reason of his or her non-success, would give the true reason, and say, —

"It was because I cannot dig."

It seems to me, that, as I suggested at the beginning, the individuals of whom this confession is true, whether workers of high or of low degree; business characters, day laborers, artists, writers, scholars, housekeepers, seamstresses — no matter

what — may one and all resign themselves to mediocrity, if not to utter failure. For it is just as my grandfather said, “You’ll never get on in any kind of business without you put dig into it.”

VI.

AUNT SYLVIE'S LETTER.

FRIEND S. :

We turned one of our gatherings into a donation party for Aunt Sylvie Peckham. Her two rooms were crowded with people, young and old, and all of these people were in that happy state of good humor which, as Eunice Hartman remarked, always seems to come from the making over of one's belongings to a person in need of them. It was a truly interesting occasion. Everybody said funny things, everybody laughed, and everybody almost cried to see Aunt Sylvie so much overcome by her emotion. The poor old woman has rheumatism in her hands, and could scarcely wipe the tears from her eyes. Jed unpacked the things. He reached, with his long arms, into this corner, and that corner, bringing up packages, baskets, jugs, — always getting off some kind of joke, so

as to make Aunt Sylvie laugh. Time was when the Widow Peckham could herself assist the poor, for her husband, in his prime, was one of the foremost men in the town where they then lived. But that was a great many years ago.

The donation party was the means of our getting a letter to read at our next gathering. Aunt Sylvie, in talking with Aunt Nabby Pryor about the kindness of the neighbors, expressed her heartfelt gratitude, and likewise her regret that there was nothing she could do in return.

Now a day or two previous Aunt Sylvie, with Aunt Nabby's help as scribe, had nearly finished a long letter to her grand-nephew Samuel, named for her husband. When she was speaking of her regret at being unable to do anything for the neighbors, Aunt Nabby said to her:

"Do let me read this letter, or a part of it, at one of our sociable meetings. 'Tis a beautiful letter, and 'twill be very edifying for our young folks to hear."

The matrimonial advice contained in the letter occasioned a lively discussion. Aunt Sylvie, when told of this, seemed quite pleased to think she had furnished us with the means of an evening's entertainment.

A PORTION OF AUNT SYLVIE'S LETTER.

. . . Every time I try to write a letter, I think to myself, "Maybe this will be the last letter I shall ever write to him." And then I think, "If it should be, what can I say to Samuel, as my last words?" For it is possible that we two shall never meet again in this world. I am just ready to lay off this earthly body, and now, when I look back through so many years, there are only two things that seem of much account, Truth and Affection. It does not seem any matter to me, now that my husband, your Uncle Samuel — you never saw your Uncle Samuel; he died before you can remember. He was a beautiful man — one of God's good men; he did not live to be very old. You could not understand, if I should tell you, how much I have missed him since he died, for it has seemed as if only just a part of me kept on staying here, he was such a man to lean upon; and I did not feel like anybody, myself — I was going to say that it does not seem any matter to me now — though it was a blow at the time — that your uncle lost so much by signing for Nathan Alden and Mr. Armstrong, or that some folks used to try to run him down. It was only because he was strict in his dealings, and upright, and would

not swerve, or connive; but it fretted me, then. And it worried me very much that all through his last years he would not afford himself a new broadcloth coat, though he stood in need of it greatly. "One more brush, Sylvie," he would say, in his pleasant tone. And I sponged it in log-wood tea, and brushed it till it was very nigh threadbare.

You see that I am not fit to write a letter, my mind wanders so; and I have not said what I meant to. I started to say that all these matters I have been mentioning seem trifling now. They all fall away, and leave nothing but his loving kindness standing clear and bright. If he had been a cheat, should I be longing so to meet him soon? Or if he had been cold and hard? But he was very tender-hearted; and, O, Samuel! believe an old woman, that there is nothing in the world of so much value as Truth and Affection.

And when I think of what a blessed companion he was to me, the reflection comes into my mind that, in the course of nature, you will soon think of choosing a companion. It is a great thing to choose a companion, meaning to pass your whole life with her. Don't choose for good looks altogether, Samuel, though I can't blame you if you don't

feel like taking up with a very homely girl. Still, a homely girl is more likely to be humble-minded, and a handsome one is more likely to be proud and high-strung, and think too much of vain show and adornments. When anybody has to live with anybody day after day, year in and year out, temper is more to be thought of than good looks. See first how a girl behaves at home.

“And pray be shy of a dressy girl, for if she spends her thoughts and her time mostly on dress, she won’t have many thoughts nor much time to spend on you, or on higher subjects. Still, I shouldn’t want you to marry a dowdy, for then she wouldn’t keep her family looking fit to be seen. A neat, orderly, care-taking person is a great benefit to a family ; but I should not want one of the kind that are too strict, and that make a man take off his shoes on the doorstep, and go in in his stocking feet, for they make you uncomfortable. There’s a difference between staring and stark blind.

And pray don’t demean yourself to marry a girl for her money. That would put you where you would always feel beholden to your wife ; though it is not a thing impossible that a rich girl might have an affection for a poor young man. And that would alter the case, for money, or the

lack of money, should not stand in the way of true affection ; and I don't say but that in such case it would be a convenience for a young man to have some capital to start with, — if he did not get married to the girl on purpose to get it, — and she might possibly think so much of him that her riches would seem but as an empty bubble when set against his affection. In such a case, you would have to use your judgment. I think that in no case a young woman should consider herself as being ready to be married until she has a reasonable quantity of cotton cloth made up, and plenty of bedquilts.

As to learning, I don't exactly know how to advise you. A man does not like to feel that his wife knows the most ; and if it happens that she does know the most, she ought to know enough to keep it to herself ; for a man never likes to look up to a woman, neither does he want her too ignorant to be any company for him, and to be a good manager. I think you will have to use your judgment in this case, too. I suppose there is such a thing as hitting just right, but old 'Squire Spinner used to say't was hard to find a woman that knew just enough, and not too much. You see, a woman has to be considerable knowing to make her husband com-

fortable, but when she's too knowing she's apt to make him uncomfortable, without she's pretty shrewd and sensible. I think you will be the most likely to take comfort with that kind of a wife who will give way to her husband when they two are contrary minded.

'Tis a great thing to have a wife that knows how to be saving. 'Tis no use for the man to grub and scrub along, if the woman wastes as fast as he earns. You need a wife that will mend a hole when it first comes, and not wait till it's too big to ; and that knows how to use up odds and ends, and will stay in the house and attend to her work.

So you see it makes a great deal of difference what kind of a companion a man chooses, for she will have a great effect upon him for better or for worse. If you can find one that is good-dispositioned, and sensible, and moderately good-looking, and not too set, and who has enough, say, to get a few things together to go to housekeeping with, why, there's considerable chance of your taking comfort together. Her religious views must be thought of ; though, as a general thing, a wife leaves her own meeting, and goes with her husband.

But, after all, love will go where 'tis sent ; and

if it should happen in your case to be sent to the wrong one, and your wife turns out a thorn in your side, why, get along with it as well as you can, for it may be that you need a trial to your patience. And, above all things, make your own self what you ought to be, and don't hurt her feelings.

And one thing more. It is the cruelest thing in the world for a young man to keep company with a girl till she likes him too well ever to like another, and then leave her. I've seen girls sicken and die in such cases. Remember this, and don't forget it. . . .

In my next I will write you about the discussion which was called up by some things in this letter.

VII.

IS IT ANY DAMAGE TO A GIRL
TO BE PRETTY?—A LETTER FROM MARY ANN.

MY DEAR EUNICE:

Allen says he wrote you the heads of Aunt Sylvie's letter, but, writing in a hurry, could not give the conversation. I was sorry you had to go away. However, shopping and visiting are both among the necessities of life, taking life in a broad sense.

In the letter Aunt Sylvie warned Samuel against marrying a pretty girl. One of the company raised the question, —

“Is it a damage to a girl, her being pretty?”

Afterwards the question was changed to, —

“Must it be a damage to a girl to be pretty?”

One answer was, —

“No; not if she has common sense.”

Then Allen asked, —

“What is it to have common sense?”

Everybody seemed ready to answer, but nobody seemed to know just what to say. At last Jed spoke up and said, —

“I know what it is not to have common sense.”

This turned the laugh on Jed, and the young fellow next him asked him if he knew by experience.

“Yes,” said Jed; “from other folks’ experience! Not to have common sense is to be lobsided.”

“That is,” said Allen, “too much of the weight is on one side. I think you are right. If a teamster should place his load so that the weight came mostly on one side, you’d say he lacked common sense. If a minister should preach the same idea every Sunday, and no other one, you’d say he lacked common sense. If Mr. Johnson, depending on his farm for his vegetables, should plant it all over with peas, you’d say he lacked common sense. If Mrs. Johnson, with ironing to do, and three or four hungry men coming to dinner, should iron till the hungry men came in sight, you’d say she lacked common sense. If a person having only twenty-five dollars in the world, should spend twenty for a ring, you’d say he lacked common sense.”

“But how does all this apply to the pretty girl?” some one asked.

"In this way," said Allen. "When a girl considers her pretty face of such importance that she allows her thoughts to dwell continually on that, and finds her highest gratification in making that attractive, and expects to please chiefly by that, and seems never to think of improving her mind, or that she has a work to do in the world, why, then we may say she lacks common sense. The weight of her load comes mostly on one side, and that the weakened side. In all these cases we see what Jed calls lobsidedness. A person of common sense keeps himself and his affairs well-balanced."

"And looks ahead to see how he is coming out," said Sister 'Cindy. "Just try my definition," she continued, "on your example. The teamster would need to look ahead and see how far his load would be likely to go without capsizing. The minister would need to look ahead, and see if his hearers would continue to hear him. Mr. Johnson would need to look ahead, and see if his family were going to live on peas all winter. Mrs. Johnson would need to look ahead, and see if her hungry men would be satisfied to sit down to an ironing-table. The man with the ring would need to look ahead to see where his board and clothes were coming from. The pretty girl must look ahead,

and see that her life will be a failure if she takes no pains to cultivate her mind, and does no earnest work in the world."

Much more was said on the subject, and we all came to the conclusion that a pretty girl might have common sense, and that it need not be a damage to a girl, her being pretty.

"But, as a general thing," said Miss Luce, "a homely girl stands a better chance of being sensible than one of the other kind; for she naturally says to herself that, if she can't look well, she can do well, and study well, and make the most of herself in such ways."

Mrs. Johnson remarked that homely girls were likely to think all the more of good looks, for the very reason that they could not be good-looking themselves. "Besides," said she, "they are very often envious of the pretty ones; and envy is as bad as vanity."

"And it is said," added Mr. Johnson, "that a homely girl spites the pretty ones, and feels rejoiced when they begin to 'fade.'"

"I don't believe a word of it!" cried Sister 'Cindy. "'Tis a libel on homely women to say they do not take pleasure in looking at a handsome face."

Jed proposed that, to decide the matter, all the pretty girls in the room should stand up, and tell their feelings, and then let the homely ones do the same.

Mr. Parson Chandler said he was afraid that every girl would stand up the first time.

“Why not try the experiment with the young men?” suggested Miss Luce. “I’ve seen a good deal of human nature, feminine and masculine; and it is my belief that you find pride in personal appearance on both sides.”

Then the question was started, —

“Is it not right to have a regard for personal appearance, and for such outward matters as dress, manners, language?”

Mrs. Parson Chandler said she considered these but trifling matters. She thought we ought to make sure that the heart is right, and not pay much attention to looks. Life is short. On our death-beds we should not be thinking about our looks. This world was only a preparation for another.

Mrs. Johnson said there was a time for all things. It was our duty to occupy our minds with very many subjects which would not interest us on our death-beds. She was not sure that this

life was only a preparation for another. The greater part of Christ's teachings had reference to this world and this present life. "Love one another." "Do good, hoping for nothing again." "Love your enemies." "Forgive unto seventy times seven." And the song of the angels at His birth was "Peace on earth. Good will among men."

Allen thought we ought to take an interest in the things of this world and this life for their own sakes, especially things in nature. The blue sky, the green fields, flowers, sunsets, running waters, — all these call up within us feelings of pleasure. They are fitted to us, and we to them, by our and their Creator.

"Then there is music," said he. "We are so made that we cannot help enjoying music; and we may almost say that the whole human race is so made as to enjoy moving to the sound of music. Nearly all the nations and tribes we ever heard of have had their dances and their marches. I think it is right to take pleasure in these things, and in all other as harmless amusements. I consider amusements as among the necessities of life, — that is, of a satisfactory, rounded-out life. Without them we grow cold and hard."

“And as for our outward appearance,” said Sister ‘Cindy, “I think we ought to look as well as ever we can; and by ‘we’ I mean everybody. Why, Nature herself gives us the hint. She tries to look well. She comes out in pretty colors, and dresses herself with flowers. Even her mud-puddles have handsome pictures in them. Think of an apple-tree in bloom! Think of a rosebush of roses! You’ll find some pains taken with looks there!”

Miss Hitty Hosmer, an out-of-town cousin of Miss Luce’s, remarked that it was not given to human beings to be as simple and unconscious as a rosebush.

“But it is given them to be sensible — if they will be,” said Miss Luce.

“In these matters,” said Allen, “we shall have to follow Aunt Sylvie’s advice to Samuel, and use our judgment in deciding how much attention to give to the inward and how much to the outward adornment. We must keep up the balance, and not become lobsided, you know.”

“And we must use our consciences,” said Sister ‘Cindy. “You know we agreed that religion should be carried into the smallest details of life. I believe there’s a right and wrong in these

matters we've been speaking of, just as much as there is in praying and not praying; in going to meeting and not going to meeting. It is right to pray; but it would be wrong to spend the most of our time in making prayers. And a person may sin as much in going to meeting as a vain girl would in curling her hair, or even in painting her face."

Some one asked, —

"How can anybody sin in going to meeting?"

"Why, it is generally understood," said Allen, "that we go to meeting Sundays for our spiritual good. Now, when people go because it is respectable to do so, or in order to stand better in their business relations, or to see, and be seen, or because they will be talked about if they stay at home, — then they are hypocrites; and hypocrisy is as bad as vanity, and as bad in one place as another."

I have given you only a small part of the conversation, but the untold shall be told you on your return. You know how it has been with us here. You know that ever since we first discussed Wickliffe's preachings there has been much talk — both at our gatherings, and elsewhere — concerning his idea of the religion of a good life as being far ex-

alted above a religion of belief and observances. There seems to be a general waking up to this idea, — a sort of revival of goodness, so to speak. We feel, more strongly than ever before, that the religion which does not influence our daily lives is no true religion.

Mr. Johnson thinks, and so do I, that the effect of this waking up can be plainly seen. It can be seen in the changed manner with which we listen to words spoken against our neighbors; in a more earnest sympathy with those who are in trouble; in our readiness to help the helpless; in a more abundant charity toward one another's faults; more patience with weaknesses; greater forbearance where opinions differ. It cannot be all our own fancy that there is an increased willingness in certain miserly characters to part with money for a worthy cause; a stricter honesty in certain quarters, where honesty had been lacking; also, more appreciation in families of the labors and anxieties of the different members, and more good humor one toward another, even the tone of voice with which mothers reprove their children, has, we think, a gentler sound.

'Cindy calls, and I end abruptly.

VIII.

COMPANY COMING.—A LETTER READ AT ONE OF THE BYBURY GATHERINGS.

MY DEAR NIECE BECKY:

What would you say if I were to write that I accept your invitation, and am coming by and by to pass some few days with you? Alas! my prophetic soul — assisted by my past experience — tells me that you will say, for one thing, “Now we will have to get ready for company.” Let me beg, entreat, implore, that you will not get ready for me. I know too well what this process means. It means pillow-shams, and furniture set back. It means richness in cooking. It means fatigue on your part, and, also, loss of your society on mine; for this “getting ready” usually continues so long as the company continues.

Shall not company have a voice in what so fearfully concerns it? Is the well-being of visitors to be forever sacrificed to the false pride and vanity

of the visited ? For these motives are at the bottom of the matter. They are not always the only ones ; we must make some allowance for hospitality, and a desire to please. But false pride, vanity, and ambition to be thought to set a good table, are among the actuating motives. It often happens that the women of a family have each a reputation as cook. "Mother" is a champion pie-maker ; Nancy never fails in having good cake ; Ella's blanc-mange, or Charlotte Russe, or floating island, unequaled. At the approach of company, each of these feels called upon to sustain her reputation at almost any sacrifice of time and convenience. Nancy shuts her piano, or her book, Ella drops her sewing, "mother" hustles her mending into some out-of-the-way nook, and forthwith the three roll up their sleeves, don their kitchen aprons, collect their sugar, flour, lard, raisins, currants, citron, spices, etc., and proceed to do their best ; that is to say, their worst. "How much butter for this?" "Half a pound ; put in more for company." "How much sugar?" "Three cupfuls ; heap the cups for company." "How much citron?" "A pretty large piece for company." "How many raisins?" "There can't be too many for company." "How much shortening?" "You must make a rich crust for com-

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pany." In some cases, even common white bread — to say nothing of biscuits — must be shortened and extra-shortened for company.

I will tell you something which once happened to me. Certain business duties having detained me until nearly evening in a neighborhood at some distance from home, I decided to accept an oft-given invitation to drop in at any time, and take my tea with an acquaintance who resided in that locality. The family were out, on my arrival, and, owing to a mistake on my part, I passed through the dining-room, in going to the parlor. The table was neatly laid for tea, and I could not help seeing upon that table a dish of baked apples, a plate of plain-looking gingerbread, some sliced meat, and the greater part of a large white loaf. Perhaps these drew my attention more strongly from the fact that I was desperately hungry.

The family very soon arrived, welcomed me cordially, and the feminine portion of it left the room to "see about tea," as they said. "Luckily, that cannot take long," thought I to myself, "for tea is about ready." But the meal was delayed nearly an hour. I had reckoned without my host-ess. Being summoned by that individual to the table, I found she had changed all that. The cloth had

been replaced by one which stood up in ridges. As to the table paraphernalia, I could not particularize; but I saw that, instead of the former neat simplicity, there was now a gloss, a glare, a glitter, and a gilt-edgedness, the effect of which was to put buckram into my manners, and almost into my heart.

But the worst part is yet to be told. The baked apples, the substantial loaf, the gingerbread, the sliced meat, had been removed, and in their places were preserves, hot biscuits, fruit cake, and jelly cake, and fried oysters.

I must not omit to state that on a plate were a few thin slices from the loaf. But four times as many slices would scarcely have sufficed for the just-named purpose; and to eat the whole, even of those, would have been impolite. To eat the whole, and then call for three successive plates full, would have been — well, there is no term by which conduct of that kind can be described. I longed inexpressibly — yes, inexpressibly is the exact word — for the baked apples, the cold meat, and the whole of the loaf.

It is a homely saying among country folks, visiting, “Don’t put yourself out on my account.” My dear niece and namesake, if putting yourself out

implies the proceedings I have been speaking of, do, please, stay in.

But on one thing I greatly depend, and I mention it with fear and trembling, knowing almost to a dead certainty, that it will put you out to gratify me. I beg for that joy and comfort and necessity of life which most housekeepers are eager to exclude from their dwellings; namely, sunlight. Do not, I pray you, dear niece and namesake, shut me up in a darkened room! Carpets? Yes, I know; but I will lay down protecting coverings, I will shift these protecting coverings, I will take almost any trouble to prevent damage, if you will only grant me sunlight. But, alas! I fear that damage to carpets is not the only consideration which will be brought to bear against my petition. The matter of gentility will come in. To look genteel, a house should present a half-shut-up appearance. I know whereof I affirm. At your Cousin Mary's my chamber carpeting was straw matting, and on the strength of its unfadingness I flung open the blinds, rolled up both curtains to within one pane of the top, and let in whole floods of sunshine. One day Mary said to me, "Aunt Rebecca, if it is just as agreeable to you, I wish you would lower your curtains a little, and keep half of one blind shut ;

it looks so, when anybody is passing by, to see everything stretched open."

A belief in the gentility of gloom is abroad in the community, or rather it is at home in the community. We find it everywhere. I have often noticed the complacent, satisfied air with which the country housekeeper, after tidying up her rooms, goes from window to window, closing the blinds, or dropping the paper shades. The city housekeeper has the advantage of her country sister, her house being usually located in such a manner as to have windows only on two of its sides. She also has at her command heavy and abundant material, and with her three thicknesses of curtains can have the satisfaction of so darkening her parlors that across the room she can scarcely distinguish the features of her dearest friend.

The same worship of the dim prevails in many of our fashionable churches. There has been much eloquence consumed in praising that line of Scripture: "Let there be light!" But the very clergyman who reads these words of a bright Sunday morning may do so with his head inclined to a gas fixture. It is the common belief, I think, that light was produced by a distinct act of creation as a special and unspeakable blessing to mankind.

But the civilized portion of mankind, as a general thing, seem to prefer being genteel to being blest. We see that plants and animals cannot thrive without sunlight; we know that in this respect the same law which governs them governs us, but — shall we not have the house look well to passers-by? Shall they see the blinds open and this blessing which is to make us thrive pouring in upon us? I wonder how Arctic explorers feel about the matter? I wonder if they do the correct thing, and when the sunlight streams forth upon them after a winter of darkness, screen their hatchway and cabin windows and so contrive to bring about this genteel gloom?

In our towns and cities are many houses the chief apartments of which are kept shrouded in an almost Arctic obscurity. The fact that the air inside those houses needs what the sun's rays alone can give it, is ignored entirely, even by women, who are obliged to live mostly within doors. Not many, even of the most intelligent among them make a point of letting in this needful sunlight. The average housekeeper drops the curtains on leaving a room, and shades the windows of her sleeping chamber. "But," you will say, "this curtain dropping is not a matter of gentility alone, it

is a matter of economy. We cannot afford to let the sun fade our carpets." This makes a very simple thing of it. The question becomes merely this : shall our carpets last, or we ? The original purpose of houses was, I suppose, to shield us from unfavorable weather in order that we may live and thrive. But if we shut out from them the sunlight by which we live and thrive, they are thus made to defeat their own purpose. Now it stands to reason that carpets shall not regulate this matter. Are carpets made for houses, or houses for carpets ? If the latter, then let us put up small but tasteful buildings, carpet them richly, shut them carefully, and build other houses close by for dwelling houses. We could step in to see the carpets occasionally, and could take our friends in. For our dwelling houses we would have straw matting, or carpets which will bear fading, or stained wooden floors, or wood carpets, with rugs here and there, as foot comforts ; a rug, you know, is easy to cover or to move.

IX.

LET US VISIT ONE ANOTHER.

“ACCORDING to her notions,” said Mrs. Chandler, after reading Aunt Rebecca’s letter, “people are not to trouble themselves about what they are to eat.”

“Oh! she doesn’t mean that,” said Eunice. “She means that we should put the trouble in the right place. People who rest content with a very poor quality of bread, and a scarcity of fruits and wholesome meats, will often trouble themselves a great deal to manufacture what are called ‘light victuals.’”

“Yes,” said Mary Ann, “see how it is with apples. Just bake them in a pan with a little water and with sugar sprinkled over them—or with the cores taken out and sugar put in the middle—and they are delicious; or cook them in quarters, or stew them. But either of these ways is too little trouble. We are not satisfied until we

have made a mixture of flour and grease and smothered them in that, and so put work into them."

"Here's a way of smothering strawberries," said Eunice, taking up a newspaper. "Listen: 'Three pints of flour sifted with two teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar, dissolve a teaspoonful of soda in a pint of milk, or water, stir together, and before molding add half a cupful of butter, or lard, melted, but not hot; stir this in also, and then mold thoroughly. . . . When taken from the oven, split open your cakes, butter them well and cover with strawberries, mashed and sweetened.' Now strawberries are much better eaten as they grow, to say nothing of healthfulness, but we are not satisfied, as Mary Ann says, until we have put work into them."

"I might put up with plain living myself," said Mrs. Johnson, "but I should want something better set on the table before company."

"And by something better," said Allen, "is commonly understood something sweeter, richer, greasier. I once tasted, at a picnic, some excellent cooked pears. The next day I was the guest of the family who sent them. There were pears on the table, cooked in the same way as those of

the picnic, but made so sweet, on my account, that I could scarcely more than taste them."

"This makes us think," said Mary Ann, "of the woman who 'put in four spoonfuls,' because 'tea couldn't be too sweet for the minister.'"

"I knew of a city judge," said Allen, "who, when riding in the country one day, thought he would take that opportunity of drinking a glass of pure milk. The old farmer who brought it to him added to it a little molasses, thinking to give him 'something better.'"

"I believe that if some folks could make their company cake all butter and sugar, they would," said Miss 'Cindy.

"O, no! they wouldn't," said Eunice, picking up the newspaper, and reading rapidly. "They would 'Take a cupful of butter, two even cupfuls of white sugar, three cupfuls and a half of sifted flour, one scant cupful of milk, three teaspoonfuls of baking powder in the dry flour, five eggs, leaving out two whites, make frosting of the remaining two whites, with eight tablespoonfuls of fine white sugar (a little heaped), spread on the layers of cake, then a thick layer of fresh grated cocoanut. . . . Ice on top and put on a rich filling of cocoanut.'"

“That’s just such a cake as my cousin Dora made once when I was staying there,” said Miss ‘Cindy. “She had been talking a long time about having the teachers to tea. ‘I want to have ‘em,’ she kept saying, ‘but can’t quite see my way clear to have ‘em.’ One Tuesday afternoon she said to me, ‘It’s no use waiting. The washing and ironing are done and I may as well have ‘em tomorrow as any time.’ She sent her little boy over and the teachers said they should be very happy to come. The next morning Dora was up bright and early. ‘I want to set a good table,’ said she, ‘and I’ve been awake these two hours, planning what to make. In the course of the forenoon she made this kind of cake, and cookies, and cream pie, besides boiling a tongue and cooking the family dinner. There was fruit cake already on hand. Her ‘help’ consisted of a little Irish girl twelve or thirteen years old. I was an invalid at the time and could only lie on the sofa and shake things at the baby to keep him still. He sat on the floor near me, with his back to the kitchen door. I shook my worsted at him, and my slipper, and the tidies, and then dropped things down from the table as close to his hands as I could calculate. Dora worked hard until dinner-time. After dinner

she touched up the rooms a little, filled the vases, dressed the baby and little Dora, and had just about got her own dress changed when the company came. It then lacked not quite an hour of tea-time, and she went out to make the biscuits and see to the table. At tea-time I noticed that the hostess looked flushed and talked very little. She told me afterwards that she felt too tired to talk, or even enjoy the evening, and that she should not try to have company again very soon."

Allen said he once knew a little girl^o who when inviting company, said more than she had been told to. "Mother wants you to come, 'cause she wants to have it over with."

"If those teachers were invited to many such tea parties," said Eunice, "they were objects of pity. A friend of mine once went to make a fortnight's visit in a town where she had numerous acquaintances. She was made the victim of a succession of tea parties, and on the eighth day left for home, literally fleeing for her life."

"Our talk," said Allen, "reminds me of a remark made by a celebrated personage when asked to visit the Quaker City. Said he, in declining, 'I don't feel as if I could eat my way through Philadelphia!' We see that this thing works two

ways. It prevents invitations from being given and prevents them from being accepted; so there is not only the cruelization of company to be considered, but the prevention of sociability."

"When the Simmonses moved into Bybury," said Mary Ann, "it was a long, long time before they were invited anywhere. Everybody wanted to have 'em, but nobody could get time to make three kinds of cake and *et ceteras*. Just imagine this matter of extra-feeding left entirely out of the company question, how simple a matter would be this 'having 'em.' It would at once let down the bars, so to speak, which keep us out of the delightful and desirable pastures of social intercourse. At present the case stands thus: Mrs. X. would like to invite So-and-So to come and see her, but waits till she can 'set a good table.' So-and-So would like drop in to tea at Mrs. X.'s, but are afraid to mortify her by catching her without 'a good table.' Now, this table pride, by standing in the way of social intercourse, becomes a hindrance to neighborly union, and it should have a fall."

"Yes," said Miss 'Cindy. "Think of the numbers of people, at this moment, in village, town, and city, who would like to invite, and the numbers

who would like to be invited, and all waiting for goodies to be made!"

Jed illustrated this remark by a hasty sketch made on the blank leaf of an old atlas. In his sketch, two crowds of people, separated from each other by a stream, were reaching out their hands as if eager to meet. Cooks were building bridges of cakes and pies, in order that the people might pass over.

X.

MRS. LAMMERKIN'S ACCOUNT.

*Furnished to Miss 'Cindy by one of her Relatives,
and read at one of the Bybury Gatherings.*

My cousin says, that if some married woman who does her own work, would give an account of a day's goings-on in the house, just exactly as they happened, it would be very interesting to hear, and says if I will write one, she will come up to North Bybury and do a week's mending for me. It will be an easy enough matter to write one, and I will take yesterday, not because it was different from the general run of days, but because its goings-on are fresh in my mind.

John got up and made the fire, as is his custom, and then went out to the barn. I got up as soon as he shut the outside door, — this is always my signal, — and crept down-stairs as softly as I possibly could, so as not to wake the baby. I com-

monly stir up my johnny-cake over night, it is such a saving of cream o' tartar, but this time we were out of meal and John was going to get some down at the village when he went to the caucus. I thought he did, but seeing the meal-bucket was nowhere to be seen, I ran out to ask him about it. He said the store was shut up when he came by, and I'd better send Johnny in to Susan Moseley's to borrow some, for we don't feel as if we could make a breakfast without a johnny-cake, and besides we were short of white bread, as Sister Sprague and her family spent the afternoon here the day before. I set some a-rising as soon as they went home, but the weather came round cold in the night, and come to look at the dough it wasn't half risen. I threw a lot of potatoes into the oven, in case worse came to worst, and went all the way up-stairs to call Johnny, as he is hard to rouse in the morning, and if I called up the stair-way it might wake the baby. Johnny was loth to wake, especially to go of an errand, and I knew it wouldn't be safe to leave him until he was sitting on the outside the bed with his clothes in his hand. This took so long that by the time I got down-stairs the fire was out. I cut up a shingle with the carving-knife, and set the fire going. It was

about this time, I think, that Johnny called down that his trousers had a hole in them. I noticed, the night before, that he slunk off to bed in a sort of sideling way, and was mighty ready to go. It seems he made that hole sliding down hill with no sled, — his was broke, — nor anything else to slide on, which had been forbidden. His other pair of every-day ones were in the wash, so I told him to put on his best ones till I could get the hole mended, and to hurry after the meal. The noise we made talking back and forth waked the baby, as I expected it would. I brought him down and pinned a cradle quilt round him and set him up to the table and gave him something to pound with. Johnny came back quick with the meal because Timmy Mosely was waiting for him outside, but I said 'twas no use his thinking of playing out with that pair of trousers on. Nellie B. came down then, ready for me to button up her waists behind, and with her shoes in her hand for me to untie the knots in the strings. She sat down in a chair with a shawl over her shoulders till the johnny-cake was in the oven. The baby cried a good deal and I had to hold him all breakfast time, and he's just the age now when he's pretty fierce to grab things. He dropped off to sleep after breakfast, and then I

stood up straight in the middle of the floor, thinking what to do first. The corned beef for dinner needed to be put in soak right off, and the dinner-pot needed to go on right off, so as to have the water boiling, and the dough was risen and needed attention right off, and there was Johnny asking, "Ma, when are you going to mend my trousers?" and Nellie B. waiting to have her hair parted and braided down behind, and I felt in a hurry to clear off the table and tidy up round the stove where John had made a litter with chip dirt, — you can't expect a man when he's doing anything about the house, to cover his tracks like a woman, — because it always mortifies me to have anybody come in and catch me up in heaps. I gave the dough a hasty stir to stop its rising, and moved it away from the stove, then put the meat to soak, then put the dinner-pot over, then set the flatirons on the back part of the stove while I thought of it, in case there should be a chance, in the course of the forenoon, to do up two shirts left over from ironing day, then took hold of Johnny's trousers, for Timmy Mosely was whistling to him outside and almost driving him distracted. Nellie B. stood up in a chair at the looking-glass to try to part her own hair for school, and her foot slipped over the edge, and down she

went and hurt herself some and began to cry ; so I gave Johnny his trousers, though they were not quite done, and pacified Nellie B., and parted her hair, and got her ready for school. Johnny darted off like a shot before I had a chance to see to his getting me some dry stuff to burn. When they were both gone I began to knead my bread. Of course the baby began to nestle the moment my hands were in the dough, but I rocked the cradle with my foot and so managed to keep him still till the bread was in the pans. Then I washed and dressed him while he was good, and put him on the floor with his playthings to play with, then gathered the dishes up, ready to wash, then ran up-stairs to set the beds airing. I brought down a sheet off Johnny's bed, to mend a rip in it, for I knew the rip would be likely to be a good deal larger the next morning otherwise, and there's no time like the present, but first I ran down cellar and fetched up a cabbage, as cabbage needs to go in early, and got that ready. Then I hunted for my needle-book, — the children had turned my work-basket topsy-turvy, — and by the time I had my needle threaded one of the neighbors came in to beg some mullein-leaves. I went up garret to get the mullein leaves, and there I spied an old dress of mine that I've

been a long time meaning to make over for Nellie B., and brought that down, so as to have it right before my face and eyes. After she had gone I concluded to let the sheet be and do up the work before anybody else came in. First, I washed the dishes, then scoured the knives, then wiped off the buttery shelves, then brushed the stove, then skimmed the milk, then got the baby to sleep, and then began to wash out a dress and petticoat for him — he's just getting into his winter clothes, and they're not all made yet. While I was in the midst of doing this John sent a man home after a key, so I wiped my hands and went up-stairs and hunted in all his pockets, and in boxes and drawers and closets, and on the floor in places where he might have dropped it, and didn't find any key, but found thin places in some of the pockets, and brought down two pairs of pantaloons and hung them over a chair-back against there was a chance to mend the pockets. Then I finished my washing, and then ran up-stairs and made two beds. While I was up there I stopped at the glass a minute to straighten my collar and put my hair into little better shape, for in the morning I was in too much of a hurry to give it much more than a "slick and a promise," but hearing the baby I bobbed it up any way and

hurried down just in time to keep him from going over the side of the cradle. I thought I'd mend the sheet and make the other bed, but upon second thought concluded to iron a shirt, as the baby's always the best when he first wakes up; but first I had to bring up the turnips and potatoes and get them ready, and then to go out-doors after some dry wood, and then to pump a pail of water. Meanwhile the bread got baked and taken out, and rolled up in the bread-cloth. I got a bad smirch on the shirt-bosom almost the first thing, which was on account of the pot boiling over while I was up-stairs, though I thought I wiped every speck off the flatiron, but it does seem sometimes as if flatirons had total depravity about them, especially when you are doing up starched things. While I was washing the smirch off, I happened to think that Johnny's other pair of everyday trousers ought to be ironed in case the ones he had on should give out, and it was lucky I did, for he came home before school was done, crying because the hole had come again. I broke my thread off too short, being in a hurry when Nellie B. slipped off the chair, and so the stitches had drawn out. I got a needle and thread and caught the edges together and sent him to the store to get some vinegar.

Then I gave the baby a sleigh-bell and the muffin-rings and the skimmer and some tin porringers to quiet him and put on a thing of rice to boil, and stirred up a pan of gingerbread for supper and got that into the oven, and put the turnips and potatoes in the pot. The baby began to grow fractious, so I moved my ironing table close up to him, and every time he cried I jingled the playthings with my foot. My aim was to get the shirt done, and I did after a fashion, just in time to set the table for dinner. I had to carry the baby round with me while I was setting it, for I couldn't bear to turn him off any longer. While I was taking up dinner Nellie B. was learning her map-lesson in a terrible hurry, she said, "for all that missed would have to stay," and I actually had to stop between the cabbage and potatoes to find the Gulf of Mexico. Altogether I forgot the gingerbread until I happened to spy the oven door, which Nellie B. opened unbeknown to me to dry her feet, and it fell in the baking, but I'll risk its going a-begging. Johnny kept the baby still by piling up the tin things and having launchings with them.

After dinner, I washed the dishes and swept up around the stove, and gave the stove a little brush, and watered my plants, and looked at my pickles,

and mended the sheet, and made the other bed, and ironed the baby's dress and petticoat, and let down Nellie B.'s dress for Sunday, and basted a ruffle in the neck of it, and sponged the cloth for Johnny's new suit of clothes, and ripped the old dress to pieces. I wanted to get through with most of my odd jobs, for next day would be cleaning day, and next day would be baking day, and next day Sunday, and then would come on another week's washing and ironing and so on. In the evening I mended such things as would be likely to be needed first, and finished rebosoming one of John's shirts, and pared some apples for sauce, and picked over some raisins against Saturday's baking, and helped Johnny with his examples, and stirred up my johnny-cake for morning. I sat up rather late in order to finish another of baby's little dresses. Baby slept better than usual through the night, and I should have had an uncommonly good night's rest if Nellie B. hadn't waked crying with the earache. Luckily, it happened before the fire was out, so I roasted an onion in the ashes and clapped the heart of it in her ear and bound up her head, and after a while she went off to sleep. Some say that a piece of fat pork is better than an onion.

XI.

MR. LAMMERKIN'S ENDEAVORS, AS NARRATED BY MRS. LAMMERKIN.*

I'M neither a "mejum" nor a mind reader, but I can give a pretty good guess as to the time when John first thought of our employing hired help. In my opinion, this happened one day when I was not feeling well, and he offered to do the work. John is one of the kindest-hearted men. He bolstered me up on the front-room lounge, half smothering me in shawls, and, said he, "Now, Elinor, I can stay in the house to-day as well as not; and if you'll make out a list of the things you were going to do this forenoon, I'll do them just like a book." So I mentioned the principal things, and he wrote them down.

Get children ready for school; wash dishes; sweep; make the beds; fill the lamps; see to the baby; rub the knives; make a stew for dinner;

* Read by Miss 'Cindy.

make mush for dinner; skim the milk; work over yesterday's butter; bake the bread; iron the baby's flannel petticoat; hang out some clothes left in soak since Monday; bake a pie for supper. There was a piece of piecrust in the basin, I told him, so all he would have to do was to roll it out and cover the plate and put in the mince and cover that over.

I lay where I could look into the kitchen. The baby was close by me, in his cradle, and I managed to tend him the greater part of the forenoon. John acted quite handy in getting the children ready for school, though Nellie B.'s parting did look some like a "herring-bone pattern," and in clearing off the table, I couldn't have done better myself, except that he took a good deal of time for it. "The best way," said he, "is to go on with regularity, and not get hurried and flurried." He scraped every dish as clean as a whistle, and piled them up in piles, the small ones at the top, and got the pan, and went to pour out the dishwater. "Why!" said he, "there isn't a cupful!"

"The kettle ought to have been filled up," said I. "You have to look out about that."

He filled up the kettle, and said he believed he would sweep the kitchen. He carried out all the

mats and shook them. "This ought to be done every day," said he, and moved the furniture into the middle of the floor, "so as to go thorough," he said, and began to sprinkle the floor, but the baby cried then, and would not be pacified.

"He wants his bottle," said I.

John brought the milk out from the back buttery and warmed it on the stove, and then said the bottle smelled sour.

"Yes," said I, "you have to look out about that. It wants scalding. You'll have to take him." He carried him round while the water was heating, and let him lie on the floor and cry while the bottle was being scalded and the milk poured in, then put him in the cradle, then set back the furniture, and then went on with his dishes in first-rate style. When they were about half-done he suddenly cried out,—

"Gracious!"

"What is the matter?" said I.

"Why," said he, "the dough is rising over and running down on the hearth!"

"Oh! I suppose so, by this time," said I, "you have to look out about that. It ought to go into the pans, but just give it a stir now, and let it wait."

He had hardly done this, and scraped the dough

off the hearth, and begun on his dishes again, when the meat-cart stopped at the gate. He wiped his hands, and slipped on his coat, and ran out and bought the meat for the stew. I told him it ought to go right over the fire, so he got the dinner-pot, and wouldn't have thought of washing the meat, but I mentioned it to him, and told him how much water, and to set it in one of the back places where it would do gradually. By this time the dishwater had grown cold, so he poured it off and went to the kettle, but there wasn't very much hot—he forgot to fill the kettle again—so he went to work on the dough, and kneaded that over, after a fashion of his own, and dumped it into the pans; then finished the dishes, then rubbed the knives, then filled the lamps and washed them all in soapsuds, —on account of letting the kerosene run over,—then swept the room, without moving all the furniture out this time, then went up-stairs and made the beds, then brought me the pans to see if the dough were risen enough. I said it must be baked immediately, but that the oven must not be too hot at the beginning. He stepped back with it.

“There's no danger,” said he. “Why, the oven's scarcely warm. There isn't very much fire.”

“Oh!” said I, “the fire has to be attended to

when there's anything to bake. You have to look out about that."

"You've said that four times," said he.

"I won't say it any more," said I. "Set it in a cold place, and start the fire."

"There's nothing but large wood here," said he.

"Johnny ought to have been made to bring in some dry stuff before he went to school," said I. "You have to loo — I mean, he's very apt to forget his chores."

John ran out in a hurry, and I'll own it did not distress me to hear him hacking away at the wood-pile, for I've done the same thing myself, and I like him to know what it was to want to start a fire in a hurry, and have nothing to start it up with. He soon came back with a whole armful of dry stuff, and put a good deal of it in and opened all the dampers, and set the old stove a-roaring so I thought the chimney would get a-fire, and called out to him for goodness' sake to shut the dampers, quick, and put in something solid.

As soon as there was a good fire a-going, and the bread had been put in, he went out into the back kitchen to wring those few pieces out of the tub, and made such a splashing that though I called — on account of wanting the baby's bottle — and

knocked with an umbrella, he did not hear, but hung out the clothes. When he came back, he looked into the oven, and said, —

“Elinor, 'tis black.”

“I was afraid so,” said I. “You have — that is, bread has to be watched.”

John looked at his list.

“I'll iron that little petticoat, now,” said he.

“Is the flatiron on?” I asked.

“No,” said he. And on it went with a thump.

“How about the meat?” said I. “Don't let it catch on.”

He took off the pot-cover.

“It has,” said he. “'Tis dry as a chip, inside here.”

“I thought I smelled something,” said I. “You have to — I mean it's a sign of rain when the water boils away fast.”

“I'll sit down, and keep watch o' these matters,” said he.

I inquired the time of day.

“Just going to strike eleven,” said he.

“You've a good many things to do in an hour,” said I.

“That's a fact,” said he. “I'd better keep moving.”

He went into the back buttery to skim the milk, and, when he came back, said the cat had saved him the trouble of skimming one pan.

"I suppose the buttery door has been left open ever since you got the baby's milk," said I. "You have to" —

"To look out about that cat?" said he.

"No," said I, "about the door. I have to stop and set a chair against it every time I come out."

This touched him in a tender spot; for, if I had asked him once to get that latch mended, I had twenty times.

Sick as I felt, I thought I should die a-laughing to see the manœuvres in that kitchen, the last hour before dinner. I think about every dish and pan in the house were brought out, and set down, some in chairs, some on tables, and one or two on the floor, to make room for the ironing cloth. John is a plucky fellow. He was determined to do everything that was on the list. He flew round like a top, running here and there, fetching and carrying, and asking questions. He spat the butter, he peeled the potatoes, and doused them in, he rushed after the meal-bucket, — for the mush, — he went like a dart to fetch the ironing cloth, taking mighty quick steps for a person that felt in no hurry, and

mighty long ones,—two of 'em took him across the kitchen,—and on his tiptoes part of the time, because I lay back with a veil over my face and he thought I was asleep. But I wasn't, I was laughing. When the water boiled away again, I heard him mutter, "Oh! you have to look out about that." He filled the pot so full it boiled over. "Oh! you have to look out about that," he muttered again. In ironing the baby's flannel petticoat, he scorched a place, and I saw by the motion of his lips that he was whispering, "Oh! you have to look out about that." He made the same motion when the spoon-handle slipped into the mush, and when the baby—baby was out there in his high-chair—grabbed the buttermilk basin; and when the fire almost went out again, and especially when some of the clothes-pins dropped off the line and let the clothes drag on the ground. 'The words were spoken out loud, then, and had another word joined to them that sounded almost like a "swear word." I asked him when he was going to bake his pie. He asked me if I didn't think we could do very well without pie for one night, and I said, Oh! yes, if he could. So he picked up the rolling-pin out of the clothes-basket and the rolling-board from behind the door, and carried them away.

The children came home from school and had to wait half an hour for their dinner. John let them eat as soon as it was ready, but said he believed he would quiet down a little before he took anything into his stomach, or he should have dyspepsia.

That evening, after the children were in bed, and the house was still, John sat by the fire a long time very quiet, as if engaged in meditation. At last he broke out with:—

“I could have done every identical thing on that list—if there had been time enough; and done them well—only for having to keep up such a continual lookout. I don’t see how the—cook-stove—you manage to think forwards and backwards and all round, and carry on so many things at once. And you do a great many more things than I did, make clothes and mend them, and wash and iron and bake and clean house, and see to the children, and tend baby night and day; and there seems to be no end, no let-up; there’s something for every hour and every minute.” “I shouldn’t mind that so much,” said I, “if there were only hours and minutes enough for the work. But sometimes when I wake up in the morning and think of what must be done that day, and of the yesterday’s work left undone, and of to-morrow’s which is sure to

come, I own I do now and then feel discouraged, particularly when baby has had a worrisome night. I soon brighten up, though, and take lots of comfort doing things for you and the children. But sometimes I think that even for her family's sake, a woman ought to have time to eat."

"Why, Elinor!" said he, "what do you mean? you always come to the table regular."

"Yes," said I, "but if a woman hurries through the forenoon and feels tired, and worried, and tremulous like, she doesn't feel like eating, and besides, her food is apt to disagree with her, especially if she has to go on hurrying right after eating; and if this sort of thing is kept up a good while, why of course she gets all run down, and can't do for her family as she otherwise would."

Upon this John went into another fit of meditation. Once during the time he muttered to himself, without stirring, "No noonings, no evenings, no rainy days." Afterwards he turned in his chair, rested his chin on the back and muttered the same thing, "No noonings, no evenings, no rainy days."

XII.

WOMAN, OR WORK?—THE QUESTION AS DIS- CUSSED AT MRS. LAMMERKIN'S.

. . . COUSIN LOU came over last night; and who should come with her but Mrs. Bent herself? "I teased her to come," said Lou, "because I thought it would be better for you to hear from her own mouth just what she does, and how she does."

The moment their things were off, Lou seated Mrs. Bent in the rocking-chair, and said, "Now we're ready. Just begin at the beginning, and tell all about it."

"There isn't so very much to tell," said Mrs. Bent, "and there wouldn't have been anything if my husband were not the best husband in the world."

"Oh! not equal to John," I exclaimed.

"Of course, not equal to John!" cried Lou; and, "Of course not!" cried John himself.

"Well, call him second best;" said Mrs. Bent,

laughing. "My husband, being the second best husband in the world, takes different views of things from most husbands."

"John does," said I.

"So much the better for you," said she.

"Let's hear the second best's views," said John.

"I suppose," said Lou, "that by 'views of things,' you mean views of household matters."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bent. "The general idea is, you know, among men and women both, that in the household the work, the week's work, should have the first consideration. In most families there is what is called 'a system.' An elderly woman, a well-to-do farmer's wife, once said to me, with evident self-satisfaction, 'I always had my system, and always carried it out. Every day had its work; and I never let my feelings interfere with my system.' At the time of her telling me this she was in a Remedial Institute, under treatment for 'weakly complaints,' which were brought on, as she told me at another time, by overwork.

"If we look around among families who, like ourselves, belong to the poorer class and do without help, we shall see that 'the work' rules. In the course of the week there must be a certain quantity of washing, ironing, mending, making,

cooking and cleaning done. Must be. This necessity is a sort of iron frame to which the woman feels obliged to fit herself. If the frame is too large, she must, as one may say, stretch out, to meet its requirements; that is, work beyond her strength, endure beyond her endurance."

"But how is this going to be helped?" said I. "There's the work, and it must be done."

"We'll consider that point by and by," said Mrs. Bent. "Let us go on step by step, as my husband did. The first step he took was with his eyes. He opened his eyes in some peculiar way, and saw, he said, that 'the work' outranked the woman, domineered over her, drove her, enslaved her. And he said, 'This can't be right. Work is a means, not an end. We don't live to work, we work to live. There ought to be a revolution,' said he. 'The work ought to come down from the throne, and 'the woman' ought to reign in its stead.'"

"And I agree with him," said John.

"Yes," said I, "but —"

"We are coming to your but presently," said she. "Let me tell first, how my husband fortified his position, that is, stated his reasons why woman's health should be more considered than woman's work. One reason is, that the children born of a

feeble, sickly, nervous, overdriven woman, are wronged at their birth, and before their birth.

“Another reason is, that such a woman cannot be the power in the family which she otherwise could; cannot fill the place which every wife and mother should fill. A family of children growing up need the mother at her best. All her faculties, mental and physical, at their best, will be required for the proper rearing of those children, and, also, to make her a true helpmeet to her husband.

“And then there’s the woman herself to be considered, apart from what she is to her family. A woman is born to enjoy life, to enjoy her health, enjoy her mind, enjoy good company, to enjoy the beautiful things which God has made, and which man has made. Her mind ought to grow. It is not a talent to be hid away in a napkin. Moreover, she is born to live. Now if a woman stays in the house year after year, breathing second-rate air, working beyond her strength, thus stunting herself physically; taking no time for reading and study, thus stunting herself mentally; why, what is this, my husband asks, but a double suicide? slow, to be sure, but none the less wicked for that.”

I said, “Your talk seems reasonable; still, this matter is not clear to me. Let alone present com-

pany, I know many a woman who finds real pleasure in keeping her house tidy, and in making goodies for her husband, even if these things take her time and strength. Don't you believe in neatness? Don't you believe in self-sacrifice?"

"Thoroughly and everlastingly!" said Lou, "if the end be worthy. I've nothing to say against housework. Too many women do too little of it. If we must stay in the house, some exercise is better than all sitting still. And it need not hinder mental culture. But when the proportions are unequal,—that is, when there is more work than there is woman, the question is, which shall give way, woman, or work? And as to the making of goodies, why, I believe that wives do take real pleasure in pleasing their husbands in this way. But, when there is more goody-work than there is woman,—which shall be sacrificed? If you say, the woman, I say, that, for such self-sacrifice, the end is not worthy."

"And as to this matter of pleasing husbands," said Mrs. Bent, "are there not better ways of pleasing them than the one just mentioned? higher ways, I mean, worthier, more, on the whole, satisfactory? Take, now, a good, sensible, intelligent husband, and give him his choice: a table provided with

‘goodies,’ with a wife too tired to be a cheerful companion, so occupied with household matters that she has no time for mental improvement, and can take no interest in ideas; or, plainer food, with a wife in good health, good spirits, who has enough mental cultivation to make her society agreeable, as well as to command the respect of her children, and to exert the right influence upon their characters. Which would he choose?”

“It wouldn’t be paying a very high compliment to say that he would choose the first,” said Lou.

“Indeed it wouldn’t,” said Mrs. Bent. “And it seems to me that when people talk of its being the duty of the wife to do things to please her husband, they should consider that there are different kinds of things, and that the husband might prefer the higher kind to the lower kind.”

“I see what you mean,” said I; “but, oh, dear! must we give them bread and water? Oh, how confused everything seems! I’m sure God has given us palates to be pleased. And so do the men work too hard. And I think it is our duty to give attention to the cooking.”

“Certainly it is,” said Lou. “I believe in giving more attention to cooking than is given — of the right kind of attention; believe in pleasing hus-

bands, in making home happy, and all that. And as for men working so hard, the conditions are wrong there, too; and a change is needed, and it will come sometime, that is, when men feel their higher needs; but, just at this particular moment, our question is — Woman, or Work? And what I insist upon, and what Mrs. Bent insists upon, and what her husband insists upon, is this, that when there is, as I said just now, more housework and more goody-work than there is woman, they shall give way, and not the woman. For a woman is made of material too precious to be scrubbed into floors, or rolled out and cut up into cookies!”

“But—Mrs. Bent, you haven’t come to my but,” said I.

“Which is, I suppose,” said Mrs. Bent, “but how is the work to be done if the woman can’t do it herself, nor hire a girl to do it?”

“Precisely,” said I.

“I don’t say,” she answered, “that this but can be smoothed over so as to be wiped entirely off the face of the earth; but I will tell you what the second-best husband in the world and his wife have done in this direction.”

I will write again and tell you what she said.

XIII.

A HIRED GIRL.—PORTION OF A LETTER WRITTEN TO MISS 'CINDY BY MRS. LAMMERKIN.

. . . I HAD noticed for several days that John seemed to watch me pretty closely, and that he tried to save my steps. As I said before, there never was a kinder-hearted man than my husband. After his mind was once turned to the subject it seemed to worry him, that, not sometimes, but all the time, my work and my cares hurried me, pressed me, crowded upon me.

“Flesh and blood can’t stand it,” — said he, — “this everlasting strain of body and mind, that never lets up for a moment, all day long, and not always at night, nor even Sundays. From one week’s end to another, from one year’s end to another, it is just the same. It won’t do. I mean to get a hired girl.”

I shook my head and said, “We can’t do that: that takes money.”

"You know I got two hundred more than I expected for the onions and turnips," said he.

"Yes," said I. "But you were going to buy the Chapman pasture with that."

"Look here a moment," said he. "Let's talk this matter over in a common-sense way. If you or any of us were very dangerously sick, and a cure could be bought, we shouldn't wait long to decide whether to spend the money in that way, or in buying the Chapman pasture. Now my reason tells me that you can't go on long as you are going on, without running down. For you spend more than you make; you are breaking in on the principal: I mean that you use up your strength faster than you get it. We are talking this over, you know, in a sensible kind of way, looking at things as they are. Of course, 'tis no more than natural that I should care a good deal about you; and if I do, why, it is no more than natural that I should rather spend money in keeping you well, than in buying the Chapman pasture. Fact is," said he, swinging round in his chair so as to half turn his face away from me, "I don't believe that even for his own sake, a man can invest money in any better way than to invest in health for his wife. That's my opinion, and I mean to stick to it."

It was something new for me to hear a man talk in this way. My father was a kind husband; but I don't think it ever entered his head that if mother had worked less, she would have suffered less, and have lived longer. He knew that she was overworked, and knew that, after long suffering from ill-health, she died in early middle age. Still, I feel sure that he never put these two things together. I think he took it for granted that her various ailments, and her death, were mysterious visitations of God. Yet, as I look back now, I see that she stopped living because she was worn out. Father thought a good deal of mother, and never grudged in the least what went for doctors' bills and medicine; but he was one of the kind of men who think that money spent inside the house, say, for convenience in doing the work, or in making things look pretty, is money turned aside from its natural course; and I believe, that, with all his attachment to mother, he felt just about the same in regard to money spent for her special gratification. She was, as I said, a hard-working woman, year in and year out, as any woman must be who has a large family to attend to, and a dairy, and more or less farm hands to board; but I remember that when she asked him for money to buy her a dress, or a pair of shoes, she

asked it as a favor, and he handed it out as if he were doing her a favor.

Perhaps it was because I had never been used to seeing men show just such kind of consideration for their wives, that the few words John said made the tears come. I bent down over the baby, and wiped my eyes on a corner of its little bib; but I rather think John saw that my feelings were touched, for he said nothing more just then: he walked towards the window, and made some remark about the weather.

But I was going to tell you about Katy Bryan. There were no young girls in our neighborhood who would live out. Our young girls are mostly in a hurry to get something to do in the city. There are two or three of them there now, partly supported by charity, who might earn comfortable and respectable livings if they would come back here and help some of their neighbors.

Things being in this way, John went to Overton, and brought home an Irish girl. I must say, that, before she came, my ideas of the advantages of keeping help were different from what they were afterwards. Mrs. Mosely and I had often talked together of what we could do if we had hired girls. When we spoke of some of my relations in Overton

who did a great deal for the poor and in visiting the sick, we always said, "Oh! all that is easy enough for them; they keep help." I had an idea that if a woman kept help, she would only need to sit down and give out her orders, and then everything would go on like clock-work. John had that very same idea.

Katy Bryan came of a Thursday morning, just two weeks ago to-day,—a stout, heavy girl. I mentioned to her the different things there were to do, then took the baby, and went into the front room. Soon after this, happening to glance towards the kitchen, I saw Katy wiping some water off the oil-carpet with her dish-towel! I could hardly believe my own eyes; I wouldn't have supposed there was a woman in the civilized world who would do such a thing. I should as soon have thought—I don't know what I shouldn't as soon have thought! And the longer I looked, the more I was amazed. She washed the plates before the cups and saucers; she strung the dishes along the buttery shelves, and set what was left of breakfast in among them, and then swept the room without shutting the buttery door; and, in sweeping, she banged away at the mats and rugs, and made such a dust you could hardly see across the room!

All through the forenoon, whatever she undertook to do I longed to take hold and do it myself. And she went about any little job — as peeling potatoes and the like — as if she had all day for it. She did hurry some in setting the table; but I had to rush round after her, and straighten the tablecloth and the dishes; and as to taking up the vegetables, and slicing the cold meat, and cutting bread, why, from what I had seen, I thought my appetite would be better if I did all such things without her help. She took the baby into the front room to hold while we ate dinner, but I was so afraid she would stand him on his head, that I called her back with him.

My cousin Lou, from Overton, happened to come and see me that evening. I told her I was almost discouraged; and that 'twas pretty hard to look on and see your work done wrong end foremost, and everything out of place; and then I showed her our kerosene lamp, burning with a three-cornered shape flame — on account of the wick having been cut up into a peak at one side — and the lamp all oily.

“I would rather do my work myself,” said I.

“Of course,” said she. “Everybody would, but everybody cannot; and so they must put up with

the next best thing. You'll get on all right, if she's willing to be told. The main thing is to have a girl willing to be told."

"But why not get a knowing one at the beginning?" I asked.

"You would have to pay very high wages," said she; "and it is doubtful if one of that kind would come to this little country place; and besides, they are apt to be set in their ways, and huffy. You have to handle them like glass. If you want any particular thing cooked, or some little job done, or to invite company, you have to feel around, and see if 'twill do to mention it."

"But," said I, "Katy is awkward and slow, and is slovenly about her work. Perhaps I could get a better one of the same sort; I mean of the stupid sort. What are you laughing at?"

"Oh," said she, "I am laughing at your simple, child-like faith that a change will be for the better. As a general thing, girls differ in kind—that is, in their kinds of faults—but not in degree. If they are quick, they slight their work and break things; if they are slow, they never get anything done. If they do their work well and quick, there will be something else wrong; they will waste; they will wear your under-clothing, or cut up your sheets,

or carry your provisions to their relations, or get drunk, or stay out late nights. Don't change. As I said before, if Katy is willing to be told, keep her."

Katy has been here a week now. I can't imagine a girl any more willing to be told. I "tell" all the time, and it doesn't seem to put her out of her course an atom. I wouldn't have believed there could be found so many wrong ways of doing things. She washes the windows with the baby's sponge, and scours the oil carpet with sand. She doesn't iron the clothes up into the gathers, and she irons the starched things rough dry. She leaves the lamps oily, she doesn't screw the tops half on, and she cuts the wicks in all shapes. She puts the bed-spreads on with their stripes running crosswise the bed; she gives us wet dishes to eat from, and black knives to eat with; and leaves the pots and kettles greasy, and dirt in the corners of the room. When she kneads the bread—which I can't bear to have her do—you'd think a horse was galloping across the floor, for she sets the dough-pan in a chair and goes at it with such might that the chair travels all round the kitchen. It makes me heart-sick to go over the house, especially into the buttery. The food she spoils and wastes would

keep a boarder, and she's a very hearty eater. She seems to handle things as if her fingers were all thumbs, or as if she used the backs of her hands. In washing the closet shelves she broke a china bowl that my great-grandfather brought home from the East Indies. When she moves a piece of furniture, she goes at it as if she meant to shake it to pieces. Several bits of veneering have come off, which I am keeping till I can get some glue.

I don't tell John much about these matters, but try my best to cover up her shortcomings, especially in the cooking line. He wonders sometimes, why, with a hired girl in the house, I am on my feet so much. He says 'tis like keeping a dog and barking yourself. It seems to me that I should take lots of comfort doing my work, if she were only out of the house, but I don't like to say so. Lou is coming again soon, and I'll have another talk with her. I shall write again in a week or two, so that you may know the end of the story. . . .

XIV.

LOOKING ON BOTH SIDES.—MRS. LAMMERKIN'S SECOND LETTER.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

I told you I would write again about our hired girl. She has gone. I did not feel able to bear the trial of her any longer. I got heart-sick of letting the work be done after her slovenly fashion. And in the cooking there was no dependence to be placed upon her. She might attend to what was in the oven, or over the fire, and she might not. It keeps your mind in a continual turmoil to live in this sort of anxiety, and to feel that your house is out of order all over, and to see everything going wrong. When she was fairly gone with all her duds, I felt light as a bird. I went at the buttery, setting that to rights, before she was fairly out of sight. Cousin Lou came next evening. She was surprised to find Katy gone.

"I'm afraid you didn't have patience with her," said she.

I laughed, and said that patience wasn't what I wanted. I wanted my work done, and well done.

"But with patience you might have taught her," said she.

"Yes," said I; "and then she would have left me. John heard her tell her brother that when she had learned something about cooking she should make a change, and go where she could get higher wages, and where there was a church."

Lou thought a minute, and then said, —

"Well, even in that, she is like the rest of us; we all 'make a change' when we can better ourselves. This matter of 'help' is a hard matter; still, in many cases, if the woman had patience, and took pains to teach, and tried to lighten the work, and made allowance for mistakes, and knew how to correct them, and how to cover up deficiencies, why, things would go on pretty decently smoothly.

"The truth is, this is a two-sided affair, and the fault isn't all on one of the sides. There are girls that no mistress could ever get on with, and there are mistresses that no girl could ever get on with. We have a neighbor who has no more consideration for a hired girl than she would have for a machine. The work is just piled on, as you may say, and

without any thought at all for the person underneath! And then there is what I call the aloofness. This woman seems to hold herself aloof from her girls, looks down upon them, speaks to them in a lofty, frigid sort of manner, as if she and they belonged to two species entirely distinct from each other; whereas, hired girls have bones that can ache, patience that can wear out, and feelings to be touched by sympathy and kindness and consideration, the same as the rest of us. You see, we can't help it. We are all human beings, and we can't any of us be anything else. The flesh, and blood, and bones, and muscles of duchesses and of kitchen girls are made of just the same kinds of phosphorus, and iron, and oxygen, and hydrogen, and all those horrid chemical things that I can never bear the sound of; both have the same affections, and both are liable to the same sorrows. No doubt there are some who would like to help it. I've seen people who seemed as if they thought it a pity there hadn't been a class created here a little above human beings, with different flesh and blood, and so forth, different sensations, different hearts, different souls, and a different heaven in prospect. Anyway, I'm glad you've had this little experience."

"Why so?" I asked.

“Oh! because it is well for people to see the general evenness of things. I have heard women who live in the country and do their own work, say of some wealthy city woman,—‘Oh! she lives an easy life, with servants at her beck and call.’ These poorer women can see that the richer woman does not wash dishes and sweep floors, but they can’t know the trouble she has in teaching and managing, and in overseeing her servants, and in keeping peace between them. Then, again, more is expected of her in various ways. Having had this experience with one girl, you can understand that a woman with two may have a dinner spoiled, or her beds ill made. But her husband might not understand. He would say, perhaps, as I have heard one say: ‘My dear, I don’t understand how it is, that with two servants in the house everything should not be well done.’ It is very plain to you, now, that the fact of there being two servants in the house would not insure everything should be well done in that house, or that the mistress should live at her ease. It is plain, I think, that the richer woman has her perplexities and anxieties, as well as the poorer one. We might see it even more plainly if we were familiar with her daily life and the duties which belong to it; that is, if we

could look on both sides, up and down. This is what I mean by the evenness of things."

While we were talking, John was stepping in and out, doing his chores, and saying now and then a word. At last, when he was taking off his boots and getting into his slippers, he came out with this question:—

"Now, I should like to know what the reason is that a woman can't get another woman that can do her work for her; a man can always get another man that can do his work for him."

"One reason is," said Lou, "that woman's work is divided into a great many kinds, all of which are to be done by one person. Some people—especially some men—seem to think that because a woman is a woman, she must know how to do every single one of these. But such knowledge isn't born with a woman; she has to learn how. Now if help have not learned how—and few of them have—how can they do? But what I want to come at now is, the variety, the innumerable branches, of indoors labor. You speak of hiring a man to do your work. Men is the correct word. If you want your trees pruned, or your fence painted, or your grass mowed, or a stone wall built, or butchering done, or your cart mended, or a wheelbarrow made, or your straw-

berries picked, or a harness repaired, you get a different person for each employment. And another thing, the greater part of these have been trained to their employments.

“And seeing we are on this subject,” said Lou, “I want to say where I think a mistake is made. Speaking within bounds, I suppose there are fifty branches of employment which come under the name of general housework; reckon them up, and see if it isn’t so. Then there are the making, and mending, and cutting out. Many women who do their own work, cut and make their husbands’ and children’s clothes. Now, I think the mistake is just here; namely, in taking it for granted, that because all these kinds of work are ‘woman’s work,’ one woman must do them all. Here the doctrine of ‘both sides’ comes in again. I know there are wives who neglect their work; and, pray, don’t understand me as blaming husbands, or as making them out to be bad. It is no more than natural that they should fall in with the general way of thinking. They don’t know that woman’s work demands intelligence, and skill, and patience, and endurance, and that it never lets up. Neither do they know how exhausting it is, nor that a woman needs outdoors air. Bad? No, indeed. I never

had a husband; still, so far as my observation goes, they are a good-hearted race — but awfully ignorant!”

John laughed, and said, “Well, here is one all ready to be instructed. Are you ready for the question? How shall we manage matters in this family, so as to make things easier for Elinor?”

I will tell you the rest of the talk in my next letter. . . .

XV.

LIGHTENING THE LOAD.

MRS. LAMMERKIN'S THIRD LETTER, GIVING THE
EXPERIENCE OF A NEIGHBOR.

. . . "IN the first place," said Mrs. Bent, "we fixed ourselves firmly upon this ground: namely, that in household affairs welfare shall not be sacrificed to unnecessary work.

"We were sure of our principle; the next question was: How to apply it? We ciphered our way out of at least a part of the difficulty by the rules of reduction and co-operation.

"The first, reduction, we stumbled upon in this way: One day a load of stone was stopped in front of our house. The driver yelled at the horse, and lashed, and swore; but all to no purpose, for the very simple reason that there was more load than there was power to pull it. At last, he rolled off a few of the stones, and then the horse went ahead. 'There!' cried my husband, 'why don't we do

that way? If your strength doesn't match the work, make the work match your strength. Roll off a few stones. There can't be a more common-sensible way than that.'

"Yes," said I. "But which stones? What part of the work can be left out?"

"What cannot be left out? Perhaps it will be better to take hold of that end first," said he, "and decide what parts are the most essential parts."

"The washing and ironing, to begin with," said I.

"The washing, yes," said he. "Cleanliness is an essential part; but is it absolutely necessary that every inch of cloth in the weekly wash should be rubbed with a heavy flatiron? Can there not be a stone thrown off here?"

"Not iron the clothes?" I cried. "Why, imagine Laura and myself with our dresses and aprons beds of wrinkles; and your shirt-bosoms the same! We can't give up appearances altogether, in this stone-rolling!"

"No, indeed," said he. "We must all look well, and so must our rooms, and our table. I believe in all that; but can't you save on the sheets and the underclothing!"

"Oh! no, indeed," said I. "Think how they would look on the 'horse'! My mother brought

me up to be particular, and not to slight. She herself never slighted. Every garment was ironed way up into the gathers, and every sheet and towel was ironed all over, just as smooth as glass. To be sure, she wasn't a well woman. But that was why she got so much praise. People said: 'How beautifully her clothes look on the horse,—and she so feeble!'

"'But that's making the wrong thing prominent,' said husband. 'The question is not, Will these things look well on the horse? but, Is this woman able to do this work? If you put in opposition wrinkled clothes with smooth clothes, why, of course every one would choose the latter; but if you put into opposition with each other wrinkled clothes and an overworked woman, it is to be hoped that every one would choose the former. We must keep the right thing prominent.'

"It was some time before I could roll off this stone with a clear conscience. In my mother's family the precept 'Have your clothes look well on the horse,' was considered almost as sacred as the moral law. But I saw that I could never be what I ought to be to my husband, children, or even to myself, unless the work could be lessened; so that, after all, the forsaking of this time-honored

precept was but choosing between duties, and choosing the higher. We had a proper regard for appearances. Of course such things as dresses, aprons, cuffs and collars, shirt-bosoms and pillow-cases, were ironed nicely. But I found that on underclothing, towels and sheets, there might be a deal of ironing left undone, and the heavens not fall in consequence; and, moreover, that after the article had been worn or used five minutes, the difference was not noticeable. I found that a slight rub with my two hands would remove most of the roughness; so whenever the case allowed, I just gave the things a shake and a rub and a fold; aired them well, shut my eyes, and laid them away. Some of them I ironed a little, say, on one side, or at the bottom, or at the top, or just gave them a dab, as I folded them. Some women say that clothes seem more wholesome with the sunshine and outdoors not ironed out of them; and we all know that flannels are not so flannelly after being ironed."

"So you had to shut your eyes at first," said Lou.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bent; "I felt so ashamed, you would have thought I was breaking all the Ten Commandments. But these feelings don't trouble

me a bit, now. If I'm troubled at all, it is that I have laid out so much strength at the ironing-table."

"On tucked and ruffled white skirts, for instance," said Lou.

Mrs. Bent turned her head and held up both hands, as if to ward off something about to fall upon her. "Don't mention them! They are a snare and a delusion — time-traps. Oh! how I have toiled over their tucks, and ruffles, and embroideries. And infants' and small children's white dresses! We live near the centre of the town. People there think a great deal of dress. Mothers keep their children in white, say, for the first two or three years, because 'they look so much prettier in white,' and because such is the custom among wealthy people. A woman who has money enough to hire servants enough to wash dresses enough for a clean one to be afforded every day, keeps her child in white, and, therefore, the woman who has no servant tries to do so, too, at whatever outlay of strength and time. It is only a servile following. If the rich people's children left off white, their children would leave off white."

"Still, it must be confessed that they act partly from good motives," said Lou. "They act from

mother-love. They are willing to tire themselves, to use themselves up. It is a kind of self-sacrifice, after all."

"But you know we have decided that if there must be a sacrifice, it shall be for worthier objects," said Mrs. Bent. Let them give up doing these things for their children, in order that they may do better things for those children. Such as reading, talking, walking with them — especially walking the woods and fields; such as getting light on matters connected with their proper training."

"I suppose," said Lou, "that you ciphered out more than one sum in the rule of reduction?"

"O, yes!" said Mrs. Bent. "We gave up light-colored paint; and had our doors grained. And we got plated knives. These saved work, and hard work; and we had longer intervals between the regular cleaning times. And I did some pretty smart ciphering in the sewing problem. I bought for the children and myself to wear good materials, but made them up in simple ways, — not homely, by any means. They were tasteful, but simple. By carrying this idea all the way through, from underclothing to outside garments inclusive, a pretty large stone was thrown off my load; for the change affected the washing, as well as the sewing.

In this matter of clothes, I induced some of my neighbors to agree with me in the idea of dressing our children simply. They were glad enough to fall in with the plan. If several unite in this, no child need feel herself peculiar. And you should have seen the reducing we did in the cooking. You should have seen the stones roll off there! Pies went first. We used to have them on the supper table every night. Dear! but weren't they a big stone off? Think of the paring, and slicing, and chopping, and stirring, and rolling, and tending them in the oven. Husband said it was folly for me to spend myself so; that he always satisfied his hunger with the first things, and ate the pie and cake after he was satisfied. So cake and doughnuts went too, and then went regular deserts. Husband came out again with his satisfaction theory, and declared, honor bright, that he always satisfied his hunger with the first course; that the other was only a palate-pleaser, and that if he really needed anything more than the first course he could eat baked apples, or sauce, or bread and syrup, or raw fruit, or whatever we happened to have. I don't mean to say that we never make a bit of cake or a pudding, in fact, we do often have plain cake, or gingerbread, and occa-

sionally, to help make out, a pudding. But they are not counted in among the must haves. I have escaped from their tyranny. If there's no cake in the house, I don't feel myself to be a shamed and sinful creature, as I used to."

I asked her if they did not get tired of eating the same few things over and over.

"My dear woman," said she, "there's no lack of variety. Think of all the vegetables, all the meats, all the fruits, all the grains!"

XVI.

“MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK.”—MRS.
BENT’S EXPLANATION CONCLUDED.

“WHEN we began to consider this matter of co-operation,” said Mrs. Bent, “my Laura was in her thirteenth year, Fred was ten, Harry five, and Nannie two. One day my husband came in unexpectedly, and found me crying. It was an hour or so after dinner; I had worked hard all the forenoon, ironing Laura’s dresses, cutting out clothes for Fred, and doing various other things. Laura made excuses for not helping me with the dinner dishes, and finally went about the work sulkily; and so I told her she might leave it. Then Fred went off, without doing his chores, knowing that I should have to do them myself. Husband asked me so very anxiously what was the matter, that I wiped up in a hurry, and began to laugh, and said the matter was, that I was a foolish little woman to expect consideration from children; and then went on to tell my troubles.”

He thought awhile, and at last said: "The children now consider their work as an outside task, that is, as something in which they have no personal concern. I wonder if they can't be made to feel that it belongs to them?"

"He touched the right spot there," said Lou. "In most families, 'the work,' no matter how much there may be, is thought to belong to the mother. When the children or others do any part of it they are 'helping mother.'"

"Husband proposed," said Mrs. Bent, "that certain portions of 'the work,' should be taken off my shoulders and distributed around."

"This co-operation rule has a good sound," said I; "but how did you act it out? And did things run smoothly forever after that?"

"Now don't understand me as claiming too much," said Mrs. Bent. "In this imperfect life, with imperfect fathers and mothers and imperfect children, we can't expect perfect smoothness. Very likely others may succeed better than we. I'll tell you how we began, or how husband began. One evening I went over to mother's of an errand, leaving him with the children. After Laura had finished her examples and had begun scribbling on her slate, her father asked her to write down all the

different things I had to do in the different days of the week, leaving out Sunday. She began to write, her father and Fred prompting when her memory failed. The list covered both sides. Husband wrote at the beginning, for a title, — 'Mother's Work,' then remarked that it was a good deal of work for one person.

" 'I help her some,' said Laura.

" 'Yes,' said he, 'I suppose you call what you do, helping her ; and that Fred calls what he does, helping her ; but, after all, you are only helping yourselves. Mother eats a small part of the food she cooks, and wears a small part of the clothes she makes and washes and irons and mends. So all this work is not really hers, but only hers to do.' Then he rubbed out the title, and wrote in its place, 'The Family's Work,' which is called 'Mother's Work.'

" 'Now I should like to know,' said he, 'why members of the family consider it as a favor to the mother when they do parts of their own work? For instance, I have noticed that to get a meal, and clear it away, there must be wood and water brought, vegetables got and cleaned and cooked, other things cooked, the table set, dishes washed, knives scoured, and some tidying up of the room

done afterwards. Now it doesn't seem right for one person to do all this labor, and for other persons to feel that their part is only the eating part. This isn't fair play. And speaking of parts,' said he, 'boys and girls seem to think it is their part to run about and have a good time, and their mother's part to stay in the house and work. This doesn't seem fair play, either. Mothers like to have good times as well as children. They like to be outdoors; like to go to see their friends; to go to meetings and lectures, and picnics, and tea-parties.'

"Husband said he knew this was rather serious talk for the children, but he saw no reason why they should not sometimes listen to serious talk, as they were entering upon life, and life is a serious business. Besides, in order to make the right thing prominent, he was obliged to talk seriously. He went even farther in this direction. He spoke of my long days spent in the house, working every minute; and, said he, 'Now if we want to keep her with us, and keep her from suffering pain and sickness, we must take extra care of her; we must not let her work too hard, and we must send her out-doors now and then, or send her a-visiting, or off on a little trip somewhere.'

"This talk of husband's had quite an effect upon

the children. It set them thinking; they seemed to understand, better than before, why they were expected to take certain parts of the work upon themselves, and the necessity—and the justice—of their doing so. They wanted to help on my account. We talked the matter over with them, and settled what Laura should do, and what Fred should do, and even what Harry should do. I gave Fred some of the indoors work, such as scouring knives and setting his own bed to airing, and gave Laura same of the errand doing, because boys get plenty of out-doors air, and girls very little.

"I asked how she could bear to have her children work so hard.

"‘Why,’ said she, ‘they did not work so very much harder than before, but the labor of getting them to do the work was to a great degree taken off my shoulders. They understood that certain parts of it were their own, and not parts of mine which they did—by coaxing, or bribing or threatening—as a favor to me.’

"There is no need of going into particulars; you know what house duties would naturally fall to a schoolgirl. The cooking was of course my work; but bringing wood and water for the cooking was Fred's work. Every morning he filled up with

water a barrel which stood in the porch. Harry helped, with his little pail, and helped some on the wood and chips. As I said at the beginning, everything did not go on with perfect smoothness; there were occasional jars, and altercations, and forgettings, and shirkings; but there was very much less worry than before — less fuss, less friction.

"The first time Fred forgot to fill the water barrel, his father asked him if he didn't think that, as that was his work, which, if neglected, came upon me, there ought to be a plan contrived of making him remember? Fred seemed rather doubtful; but finally said that he supposed so; and it was decided between them that it would be the fair thing if for every forgetting there should be a pretty long staying in-doors. There were not many forgettings after that. A system of this kind is, as we may say, self-acting: you don't have to attend separately to every little bobbin, spool and spindle, of the household machinery — you work them from a distance.

"Of course, it made a great difference having husband take hold of this thing: children are too young to consider, and mothers do not like to be always complaining that they are not able to do this, that, or the other; but when the children see

that father thinks mother's overwork, her constant confinement, are serious matters, why, they begin to think so too.

"One thing I reasoned out wholly by myself. I saw that it was hard to bring children into habits of regular work, — to 'break them in.' It seemed to me that if they could be made to grow up into such habits, this difficulty would be very much lessened. So I began with my little two-year-old Nannie, and let her do some trifling things at stated times. For instance, just before a meal, she carried her playthings back to the place where they were kept; when the meal was over, she put the napkins in the table-drawer; when the dishes were being washed, she laid a few of the spoons on the buttery-shelf. As she grew older, other things were added, as setting back the chairs after a meal, and setting them in place for a meal, laying the napkins round, and so forth. Ways of carrying out this idea will suggest themselves to almost any mother; the whole object being that a stated duty, no matter how trifling, is done at a stated time. This kind of training involves some trouble; still it pays in the end, as I can testify. But there must be persistency at the beginning: no letting up, never a single giving way. When this irrevocableness is

once felt by the child it submits to it, and then this whole thing runs itself, as we may say. The beneficial effect upon character of this habit of work, this regularity, is by no means a small consideration.

"Some mothers have a different opinion of these matters: they say of their children, 'Poor things! they will have hard work enough by and by! Let them take comfort while they can!' I think this is a mistaken kindness. I think it would be better reasoning to say, 'Poor things! they will have hard work enough by and by! It will be too bad to let it come upon them all at once!' And this applies to the upper as well as to the lower classes; for even children born to wealth will never amount to anything unless they accomplish something worth living for, and to do this requires hard work of some kind, and regular habits of work.

"But we had other co-operation. On Mondays, if no washwoman could be had, husband hired a boy, or even a man, to turn the washing-machine, or pound out the clothes; and he himself sometimes hung them out—always took them in. And he helped me a very great deal in another way. Before, whenever we were out of anything, I had to bear it in mind, and remember to tell him. He

would usually say, 'Remind me of it, the last thing before I leave the house.' Then I would bear it in mind again, through thick and thin; watch for his final departure, tell him once or twice — on a false alarm — before this finality happened, and drop everything and run to shout after him from door or window, if it happened suddenly. The errand was mine, and not his; and if he remembered it, there was a sort of feeling on both sides that he deserved a little praise. When we were planning how a stone could be rolled off here, and another there, I said it would be one big stone off, if I could have everything that was needed in the house always at hand without care or forethought on my part. He said he would gladly take that stone on his own shoulders, but how should he know when I was out of anything? We arranged it in this way: We kept a blank-book hanging at the porch door. Whenever I found that we should soon need some article, I wrote its name there, and had no care about it ever after. It was his affair then, not mine. He looked at the book 'the last thing,' tore off the list and put it in his pocket. He had no more to do than he had before, and I was saved the continual bearing in mind. Another way in which he co-operated was

by seeing that I had conveniences for doing the work. He raised the porch floor so that I didn't have to step up into the kitchen. Nobody can tell the relief this was to me."

"I suppose," said Lou, "there are a great many huabands who would have as much consideration for their wives as yours had for you, if they only knew it was needed."

"Some wives couldn't stand so much consideration," said I, "it would make them lazy. They would depend too much on their husbands."

"A few, doubtless," said Mrs. Bent, "but their number is small compared with the hosts of overworked women who really need consideration either from themselves or from others. I say 'from themselves,' because some women are so foolish, so ignorant of what they might be and should be to their families, that they will overwork and nobody can stop them. But they, as well as the others, would be benefited by learning to cipher in the rules of Reduction and Co-operation."

XVII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE. — A PAPER READ AT ONE OF THE BYBURY GATHERINGS.

HUSBAND (*solus*). — AS wives belong to the injured class, — namely, women, — they will always find somebody to sympathize with them, and pity them, and weep for them; but who is going to sympathize with us husbands, and pity us, and weep for us?

Another thing which pertains to the injured class is — rights. Now, man, single and alone, has of course no rights in own right; yet, when he forms a matrimonial partnership with one of the injured class, should he not share in the privileges of that class, and have, by virtue of his position, “rights”? As nobody is likely to take sufficient notice of me to answer my question, I will answer it myself, in the affirmative.

And the first right which I claim for our species is the food-right, — the right to well-cooked meals,

regularly served. Yesterday, our noon meal was half an hour late. The children came home from school in that famished condition to which, somehow, study does always reduce school-children, and clamorous for food. They were reproached by their mother for being unwilling to wait, for being impatient. Benny cried, and had to be shut up in the front room, where he did not shut up at all, but went off in a steady bellow. I could have bellowed myself, I was so hungry ; and, besides, it seemed likely that my dinner would be cut short — as it was — by the coming of a man to see me on business. I lost my pudding that day — steamed pudding, with sauce ; my especial favorite. Sometimes — yes, often — our breakfast is delayed a long time on account of the necessary preparations having been forgotten the night before. This irregularity is bad for the children, not only physically, but in its effects on their characters. Yesterday, we had at dinner, warm, soggy biscuit ; there being no other bread in the house, with the exception of a pile of moldy pieces.

And this reminds me of another right. For my family, I am willing to work ten or even twelve hours a day ; for the swill-man, not a moment. Yet the latter carries off, in various shapes, more

or less of my hardly-earned money, which, more or less carefully saved, would buy many of the things for which Eliza is pining, as magazines, engravings, drawing lessons for Eliza Frances, etc.

I also claim, for my own species, the clothes-right. A husband has the right to ask that the portion of the family wardrobe, which properly falls under the wife's supervision, receive suitable attention. If any human being deserves pity and sympathy, it is the husband whose underclothing is in shabby condition, and whose stockings come to him unmended from the wash. If any situation calls for tears, it is that of a husband engaged in cutting off with a pair of scissors, as evenly as he can, the worn edges of his wristbands and collars.

I don't know how it is my children have so few clothes. I always tell Eliza to buy everything they need; but, the other day, Eliza Frances, in going to the picnic, was two hours behindhand, she having waited that length of time for a dress to be ironed, yet the picnic was planned two weeks ago. Some mornings, one or another of the boys is obliged to lie in bed until certain garments — usually trousers — have been made presentable.

And here, again, the subject of waste comes in. For want of the nine stitches taken in time, — I

forget the exact words of the proverb, — I saw, last week, an excellent pair of trousers which I had bought, ready-made, for Benny, go, inch by inch, to destruction. First, there appeared, just below one knee, a small hole of the kind my mother used to call a “trap-door hole.” A single needleful of silk, applied in season, would have closed the “trap-door” very smoothly. That single needleful was not applied. The next morning the aperture might have been described by the term “barn-door.” In the afternoon, some unlucky nail took it into its head — this was Benny’s expression: he’s one of the smartest little fellows! — to go into that enlarged opening, and the result was a jagged tear, reaching nearly to the bottom. Eliza said they were not worth mending, and the washwoman had them.

Another of our rights is the right to a comfortable, pleasant home. We have a right to complain when the home is not homelike, and especially when it is destitute of order, cleanliness, and of the various little touches by which woman’s hand can make it attractive.

My mother had a larger family than Eliza has, and fewer conveniences, and less money to handle. But her boys and girls always went neatly clothed,

her house was like wax-work, she had a place for everything, and a time for everything, and, as for her pies, doughnuts, and pastry, to say that we have nothing like them in this house, is to put it very mildly indeed. Eliza says that nowadays men-folks must be less particular about their food, in order that women-folks may acquire culture. The other day, when the top crust of the gingerbread — the part I like best — was burnt to a crisp, Eliza said that she had been reading, and that while that top crust was burning she got an idea, and intimated that I was behind the times if I placed top crusts above ideas. Now, I am aware that they should not be so placed. Nobody thinks more highly of ideas than I do. I believe in the fullest culture for women. But is not culture compatible with a pleasant, comfortable home, and — top crusts ? ”

WIFE (*solus*). — Round and round and round ! Breakfast, dinner, supper, and then — prepare for breakfast ! The chain of work is complete, for the “missing links” are supplied by sewing. Oh ! why were we not so made that in one month could be done the cooking for a year ? During that month, I would consent to be tethered to the cook-stove by a string just long enough to enable me to reach the

store-room, and revolve around the extension-table; and, oh! what pies, cakes, puddings and preserves would I not spread before my dear family! And then — eleven months of blessed freedom! Time for reading, walking, sewing, — oh! but the children should have elegant clothes! Especially the girls. Benjamin likes to see them dressed like other little girls. And so do I. Book-writers say, “Watch carefully over your children. Give them your personal presence. Take them out, and show them the operations of Nature. Read, study, possess yourself of every sort of information which will assist you in the right training of your girls and boys. Get culture for your own sake. With powers of mind by which you may soar to the empyrean, why give yourself up to this drudgery of housework?” Book-writers also say, “Make home attractive. Prepare for your husband appetizing food. Welcome him always with a smile. Be orderly. Be methodical. Neglect no household duty.”

I try to fulfill all these requirements, and do not fulfill a single one. The other night, I took three of my children out walking, showed them the flowers shutting themselves up for the night, and, as we strolled along by the brink of a pond, ex-

plained the wonderful change of the polliwog to the frog. We spent a profitable and a delightful hour; but—the yeast was forgotten that night, and we got out of yeast bread, and next day I had to give Benjamin sour-milk biscuits, which were somewhat heavy on account of the stove refusing to draw, as is often the case in a calm time. It grieved my very heart that I had no yeast bread for Benjamin, he having a dyspeptic stomach, but, even if I should tell him this, he would think it very singular that so much grief and forgetfulness should exist in the same person. He cannot understand how sorry I am when I forget, or when the food is not well cooked. He has not the faintest idea of the amount of thought and calculation which go to the preparing of a meal. He likes, for his dinner, meat and all the vegetables, and then pie or pudding. There is nothing unreasonable in this; but if he only knew how easily a dinner, or parts of a dinner, may be spoiled, and how powerless a woman often is to prevent such catastrophes! If he only knew how tired I am, at times; how my back aches; how my head aches; how nervous I get, with twenty duties calling at once, and the children all wanting me, and perhaps the baby crying, and Bubby into every kind of mischief! I

feel that this unending care and toil is drawing me down, down, down; that I am, in one sense, losing my mind.

I long for books, and time to read them; long for pictures, for all beautiful and elevating influences, for the companionship of cultured women, and especially for ideas such as will assist me in training the children, which duty, Benjamin says, is the chief duty of a mother.

One afternoon a friend sent in a book entitled "Dress Reform," and composed of lectures given by women physicians. I looked it over, oh! so eagerly, searching for sensible and healthful ways of dressing my darling little girls. While doing this, I sat down by the stove to watch the baking of some gingerbread. I was also watching Bubby at the same time. He must have turned the damper with a fan which he got by reaching up to the bureau; sometimes it does actually seem as if that child was made to draw out, like a telescope! Meddling with the damper is just what suits him. The end of it all was, that my gingerbread got burnt black on top. I felt that it would be imposing on Benjamin to receive him with a smile that night, and he so fond of the uppercrust! In fact, it is hard to smile when one feels discouraged and

dissatisfied; and not only hard, but hypocritical. Take, for instance, the other day, when the market-man came late, and my little kitchen-maid had gone to her cousin's funeral, and the baby was fractious, and Bubby pulled a basin of milk down upon himself, and the stove wouldn't draw, and Benny's trousers had to be mended before school was done, on account of his having worn his best ones to school, — from necessity, — that could never do for best again after a noon's play-time. A smile on my face at such a time would have been a smile of hypocrisy or else of despair.

I wish Benjamin would sell one of his fields, and buy a library. The children's questions make me feel my ignorance. The amount of his cigars for one year would almost pay for a set of the cyclopædia. Think of having books in the house which could give the children information on every earthly object, animate or inanimate! But it would be tantalizing to have books, and be kept from reading them by this never-ending routine of work. And yet I take pleasure in working for my husband and children. I like to make things comfortable for Benjamin. It gives me solid satisfaction to prepare for him plum pudding, with sauce. Men are so fond of pudding with sauce, it does one's heart

good to place it before them. Oh! if the days were but twice as long, or twice as many to a week. But now here I am, duty calling two different ways. Information, ideas, culture, I must have, for my children's sake and my own. Good food, decent clothes, a tidy house, my family must have. How shall all this be accomplished? O dear, dear, dear! I give up in despair.

FROM AN OUTSIDE PARTY.

(To the Husband.)

Do not suppose, that, because the family duties are woman's work, a woman has strength to perform them all. It is owing to the overwork of the women of your mother's day, that the women of our day have so little vigor. A man can form no idea of the strain, physical and mental, which comes upon the mother of a family. If you knew what a labor it is for Eliza to dress her little girl like other little girls, you would advocate simplicity in dress. If you knew how it exhausts her to prepare "pies, doughnuts, and pastry," and "all the vegetables," you would be content with a simpler diet and less variety, or else employ a cook. It is poor economy, in every sense, to save your money by spending your wife.

Provide for your children good literature, that they may be kept from reading the bad. For the father of a family, books are often a better investment than land ; always a better one than cigars.

Don't forget that, in order to do her whole duty by her children, a mother needs, and must have, books, reading-time, and recreation. Many husbands seem to think that the chief end of woman is to bear children, cook, and sew.

(To the Wife.)

You are lacking foresight, calculation, and the faculty of bringing things to a focus. It is an unthrifty housewife who does not have at least one day's meals arranged ahead. Don't live "from hand to mouth." The same with clothes. Children need four suits, — one for very best, one for second best, and two for the wear and tear of every day. To get on with a scantier supply is poor economy. Promptness in mending saves many a garment from going to ruin. Spend less time in unnecessary sewing. Dress your girls simply. By a judicious training, with your own example, you can educate them to prefer a simple style. Could the several mothers of a neighborhood agree to adopt this idea, it would help

greatly in making it practical. Improve your moments (very important), and get moments by contriving ways of making the baby amuse himself. Holding a baby is not always the best way of taking care of it. For your older children, have evening readings from entertaining books of biography and natural history. Get the women of your neighborhood to unite with you in the purchase of publications on subjects of special interest to wives and mothers. The time for reading these can be found by giving up superfluous cooking or superfluous sewing. Remember that in promising to be married you voluntarily assume the prospective duties of wife and mother. Chief among these duties are those of making the home comfortable and attractive, and of seeing that the food provided for your family is so cooked as to be wholesome and palatable.

XVIII.

A TALK MATRIMONIAL.

FRIEND SOLOMON:

AT our gathering last evening we took up a contribution for Aunt Sylvie. Doing this reminded us of the advisory letter she wrote her nephew concerning his choice of a wife. Some of the company wondered what kind of a letter she would write a niece in regard to the choice of a husband. Eunice Hartman said she saw no reason why, with slight alterations, the same letter would not answer, substituting masculine pronouns for feminine, and "husband" for "wife." One of the qualities which Aunt Sylvie thought indispensable in a wife, was good temper. "Now it stands to reason," said Eunice, "that good temper in a wife is no more essential to the husband's happiness, than is good temper in a husband to the wife's happiness."

"But you know," said Miss 'Cindy, "that the

happiness of a wife is not of so much importance as the happiness of a husband."

"There's many a true word spoken in jest," said Allen. "It must be confessed that the average matrimonial suggestions of the newspapers show that Miss 'Cindy only expresses the general feeling on this subject."

"What I am going to say now has no reference to the people of this place," said Miss Luce, "but before coming here I worked as seamstress in a number of families. In several of these families there were husbands who never appeared to think themselves under the least obligation to be good-tempered. I believe their wives were sometimes actually afraid to speak to them; afraid, that is, of huffy, or sharp, or contemptuous answers. There was one wife in particular who seemed to think it a mighty piece of condescension if her husband talked with her familiarly and pleasantly. His manner to her was usually that of a superior to an inferior. It was a rare thing for him to answer a question of hers in a civil, friendly manner."

"I wonder why it is," said Miss 'Cindy, "that husbands—I don't mean the husbands of this place, any more than Miss Luce did—assume such airs of superiority, and think 'tis all right for

them to snub their wives, and to put on a crabbed or sarcastic or quenching manner in talking with them! Because a man is married to a woman shall he therefore cease to treat her civilly? Being single myself, I make bold to speak my mind, and my mind is, that husbands are just as much bound to be good tempered as wives are."

"A man," said Mr. Parson Chandler, solemnly, "has many cares and perplexities. These harass his mind and make him fractious."

"As if a woman did not have cares and perplexities!" said Eunice.

"In the particular case I referred to," said Miss Luce, "these were chiefly on the woman's side. She had several small children, poor help, or none at all, and she was very far indeed from being well. Her husband was a mechanic, working at good wages, and as a general thing was affable and gentlemanly except to his wife. He spoke to her in this way I have mentioned, simply because she was his wife."

"Did he care for her?" asked Mary Ann.

"Indeed he did," answered Miss Luce. "It was not because he did not love her, or did not desire her happiness, that he treated her so. It was, because she was his wife, and for no other reason."

"I have often observed this sort of thing," said Miss Hunt, the schoolmistress. "It is a remnant of the old barbaric idea that the wife was the property of the husband, to do with as seemed to him good."

"Well," said Allen, "we'll give in on the good-temper question. Another of Aunt Sylvie's points was neatness; certainly that need not be insisted upon so strongly in the husband as in the wife."

"I don't know about that!" cried Mrs. Johnson. "Judging by sister Nancy's husband, I calculate — Barnabas" (speaking to her husband), "you can stand behind the door while I'm telling this — I calculate that Barnabas there has saved me thousands and millions of steps. When I've been a visiting at Nancy's I've said to myself, how can her patience last? Her husband never thinks of wiping his feet, never puts a thing in its place, and 'tis just about one woman's work to run after him and set the house to rights. He goes into all manner of dirt with good clothes on, he scrapes acquaintance with nails and rails and bramble-bushes, and Nancy is forever chasing him round with a needle and thread, or with a bottle of something good to take out something!"

"Being single," said Miss 'Cindy, "I cannot speak

from experience, but I've seen enough to know that a man can lighten a woman's work, or make it harder, according as he's neat or slovenly."

Here I overheard Miss Luce say something to Miss 'Cindy, in a low voice, to the effect that she longed to express her mind in regard to personal neatness in a man, but supposed it would not do. Miss 'Cindy asked her if she referred to anything in particular. "Yes," said she. "I refer to uncleanly hands and finger nails at meal-times. There's no excuse for this kind of slovenliness, so long as soap and water and nail-brushes are to be found. We hear a great deal of talk about the importance of personal neatness in wives. I think it is equally important in husbands."

While this under-talk went on, some of the company took up another part of Aunt Sylvie's letter.

"One sentence would have to be left out, at any rate," said Mrs. Parson Chandler. "I mean that one which speaks of the wife leaving her own meeting to go with her husband. You can't shift that about. 'Twould look funny to see a man leave the meeting he had always been attending, and go with his wife."

"Coming down to the root of the matter, I don't see why that is any funnier than for the wife to

leave the meeting she has always attended, and go with her husband," said Eunice.

"But the man is the head of the family," said Mrs. Chandler.

"One of the heads," said Eunice. "The wife's belief is as dear to her as the husband's is to him. And, since woman was endowed by her Creator with reason, judgment, and conscience, it must have been intended that she should use these faculties in forming her opinions."

"Still, you can't say that religious union between man and wife is not desirable," said Mrs. Johnson.

"On the contrary," said Eunice, "I think it extremely desirable. But we cannot hope always to see it, because belief cannot be controlled."

"And since it cannot be controlled," said Miss Hunt, "I think the best way to secure harmony is that both parties should agree to differ, and to respect each other's right of opinion."

"I remember," said Allen, "that, in advising her nephew, it rather puzzled Aunt Sylvie to decide whether the wife should be mentally the equal of her husband, or his superior, or his inferior; as well informed as her husband, or more so, or less so. Miss Hunt, what advice should the niece receive on this point?"

“I think,” said Miss Hunt, smiling, “that it would promote harmony in married life if the wife should know very little indeed; just enough, say, to cook her husband’s meals properly, to attend to his wardrobe, and to keep the house in order. If the husband is intellectually the superior of his wife, she will naturally defer to him. You must see that this will promote harmony. Of course the wife would need some education; enough, at least, to enable her to read the cookery-book, and perhaps the Bible.”

“Oh! now you are funning,” said Mrs. Johnson. “Pray talk as you really believe.”

“I really believe,” said Miss Hunt, “that this state of things would insure harmony of a certain kind. Where there is perfect submission on one side, there can be no discord. But whether or not it would insure the happiness of either party is quite another question. Of all the married couples I have ever seen, those were the happiest in which the husband and wife took interest in the same subjects, aims and ideas, and found enjoyment in the same pleasures. It seemed to me that these couples were more married than the others. There was between them, not only the marriage bond, but the bond of sympathy. If you wish me to speak

what I really believe, I should say, that if either head of the family need culture and enlightenment, and almost every kind of information, it is the wife, for the reason that the training of the young children is peculiarly her province.

XIX.

ODD OR EVEN? — A VOICE FROM BEACON STREET.

TO THE BYBURY GATHERING:

Ladies and Gentlemen: — A friend has recently sent me “Mrs. Lammerkin’s Account,” a paper read at one of your Gatherings. Since reading it I have several times found myself comparing situations: Mrs. Lammerkin’s, mine, and those of other women in the various walks of life. Perhaps there is more evenness in these situations than is commonly supposed, comparing the care, and toil, and deprivations and general wear-and-tear of the wealthy city women with those experienced by a farmer’s wife dwelling in a log hut on the Western prairie; there seems, at first glance, no evenness at all in the distribution. But I think that whoever will follow the course of a family which goes steadily on from life in a log hut to “society” life in a luxurious city mansion, will find that the desirable as well as the undesirable is left behind at every step.

The family in the log hut have one room and a bedroom, and a cellar for milk. The older children sleep in bunks against the walls. The hired man, when one is employed, has a "shake down" on the floor.

As soon as means can be afforded, a larger house is built; a house with three rooms below, and two chambers. Our family now rejoice in the possession of a neatly furnished sitting-room, free from the little unpleasantnesses of the kitchen. The older children and hired man sleep in the chambers and perform their ablutions there, rather than at the kitchen sink or at the brook. Much is gained; still the gain is not total. Living in two rooms was inconvenient, but then there were only two rooms to take care of. The sitting-room is a treasure, but it and its furnishings need daily attention. It is nice to have the children and the hired man out of the way, but more and better bedding is required than answered for bunks and shake-downs; the chambers with their toilet apparatus must be kept in order; and now begins that "upstairs and down," which takes the life out of so many of our women. Mother has more comforts, but she is paying the price of them.

A few years, and the situation again changes.

The country round about is beginning to be settled. Our family wanted neighbors ; now they have them. Here, again, the gain is not total. Going a-visiting and having company take time and money ; and besides the new comers are not all desirable people. Some are meddlesome, others are coarse, others again are vicious. But our family must associate with them, and its children must play and study with their children. This is the price it pays for neighbors.

Land has risen in value and father profits by the rise. He is able to build a larger house. Mother desires a larger sleeping-room for herself ; also a spare room, sure to be fit to sit down in when company comes ; also a spare chamber, for guests ; also a back porch where washing can be done ; also a large pantry and several closets. The house is built and the necessary furniture bought. Mother sits up nights to make the curtains, bed-quilts, table-covers, rugs, chair-cushions, wall-brackets, picture frames and other fancy articles required for the additional furnishing and adornment of the eight rooms which, exclusive of closets and pantry, she now has to sweep and dust and scrub, and keep in order generally. Her added labors are the price she pays for her added conveniences.

Father sees that the price is too much for her, and hires a girl. The girl relieves mother of the heavy work, but she is slovenly, or saucy, or wasteful, or dishonest, or perhaps given to strong drink, and is disagreeable as a member of the family. Mother is sorely tried. This is the price she pays for her relief.

More years go by, and the scattered neighborhood becomes a flourishing town. Our family are now in comfortable circumstances. They move into a larger and more convenient house, and furnish it handsomely. To match this large and handsomely furnished house demands a higher style of living. The sons and daughters go to school with Judge So-and-So's sons and daughters, and must dress up to their level. Mother's dress, too, must correspond with the new state of things. Immense quantities of sewing are done, mostly by mother, for a seamstress is beyond her means, and the girls cannot help much. Their time out of school is occupied with "practising," dancing-schools, party-going, party-giving and various other matters incident to the new situation. Of all these mother has the supervision. And mother also must go to parties, and give parties, make calls and receive callers. And rightly enough; for shall not social intercourse be kept up? And other demands are

made upon mother. As a woman in comfortable circumstances she is expected to assist at church fairs, festivals, donation parties, and the like.

In her new situation mother has more clothes, more bedding, more china, more silver, more furniture, more ornamental articles, more rooms, more "help," more company than ever before; but now comes the price. Everything in this handsomely furnished house requires her personal attention. Neglect and careless handling, and moth, and rust, and robbery must be guarded against. For the more "help," there must be more teaching, more annoyances, more bearing and forbearing than ever before. Social intercourse and the delightful excitement of fairs, festivals and donation parties make serious inroads upon mother's time and strength. Time, and strength, and annoyances, and worry, and hurry, and multiplied cares, go to make up the price she pays for her step onward.

Another step is taken. Father's speculations have proved successful, and he has now become immensely rich. Our family remove to a magnificent mansion in the city where father has his business head-quarters. There is no lack of money. Mother need waste no thought in planning small economies. Both ends are sure to meet.

The magnificent mansion must have magnificent furnishing. There must be pictures and marbles, and a library, and elegant upholstery, and articles of adornment innumerable. Mother is almost literally at her wits' end. What pictures shall she buy? What statuary? What books? What adornments? Are this and that and the other in good taste? Do they correspond, or does this jar with that, and that with the other? And the expensive wardrobes of herself and her daughters, are they elegant, or merely showy? The younger daughters have a governess. Is she a person skillful and judicious in developing the intellect, and whose influence for good is assured? The idea comes home to mother that a lavish spending of money may not, after all, insure satisfactory results. She finds that to spend money well, requires brain work, and taste, and culture, and even personal exertion.

And now that our family are in "society" proper, society callers call, and society invitations are received and accepted, for the daughters must go into society; father likes to be social; and, besides it is for his interest to make the acquaintance of men of position. The evening portion of city social intercourse and city entertainments necessarily in-

volves late hours, — necessarily, because of the long distances. After business hours, the men must go all the way to their homes — often outside the city, dress for the evening, and travel perhaps a mile, or miles, to the place appointed. Previous to the last change of situation, mother had always kept the youngest of her children under her own charge, nights as well as days. Now, however, she needs to sleep late in the morning. It will not answer to have her nights cut off at both ends. But children wake early and instantly begin their day's work. What shall be done? This state of things demands a nursery and a nursemaid, and the removal from mother's room of the children with their cribs and their other belongings.

Mother now has a cook, chamber girl, laundress, seamstress, governess, nurserymaid, and a man-in-waiting. Some people may say, "I should think she might live easy now!" Easy! with seven people, most of them ignorant people, to direct, and control, and harmonize? Easy! with the care of superintending that magnificent mansion and of maintaining a correspondingly magnificent style of living? Easy! under the necessity of seeing that all the members of the family are brought up to their new level in the matters of

dress, accomplishments, and so forth, and kept there? Easy! under the innumerable demands of social intercourse? If such demands had borne heavily upon her in the previous situation, how much more heavily do they bear now? If neglect, and careless handling, and moth, and rust, and robbery were to be guarded against then, how much greater precautions must be taken now that silver services furnish the tables, jewels of price gleam in toilet cases, furs, silks, and velvets fill the wardrobes, while every apartment abounds in costly articles, some of them as fragile as costly!

And, besides the duties thus hastily glanced at, mother suddenly becomes aware that her position as a woman of wealth has yet other demands upon her — other, and higher. These demands are first made clear to her in a sermon on that subject preached by her own pastor — by my own pastor. I will drop the third person here, for the case I have been following is in the main my own. The preaching of my own pastor aroused me. “You who have wealth,” said he, in substance, “are responsible for its use. You are freed from the necessity of labor; see to it that the time thus gained is not frittered away in the frivolities of a merely fashionable life. To you in a special man-

ner belongs the duty of high culture. Read, study, reflect. Store your minds with the best thoughts of the best writers. Those whose days are consumed by toil, have no time for these things. Another of your special duties is that of upholding Art for its own sake. For you have the means of purchasing its products, and can, if you choose, acquire the knowledge which will enable you to appreciate them.

“Another of the duties of your position is, that you do something for the benefit of those who are crushed down by poverty, or ignorance, or sin. Make your influence an elevating one. Let your sympathies flow out in every direction. Relieve the deserving poor, assist the unfortunate, befriend the friendless; think and plan for the good of those who are too low in the scale of humanity to think and plan for themselves.

“And do not withdraw yourselves from your own children, giving them up wholly to the care of those whose influence upon character may be anything but good — your children need you — you, yourself. It is another of your duties to get enlightenment upon all subjects connected with the training of children.”

Such were some of the ideas of the sermon. I

have tried hard to follow its teachings, especially the last ; but if you knew the demands made upon my time, you would see how it is, that often when I fain would give myself to my children, I find that myself is not at my own disposal.

Neither are the children always at my disposal : they have their lessons to be taken, their companions to meet, their parties to attend, their entertainments public and private. Sometimes I look back with longing to the day of the log-hut period, when my older children were mere toddlers and prattlers. I could at almost any time gather them about me, and I had them and my husband to myself ; for there were no outside interests to draw us apart. The kinds of excitement which city life brings to the children are not so good for them as were those of the log-hut life. Those were simple and healthful, yet pleasing : going a-nutting, making playthings, learning to ride and to drive, caring for a pet lamb, seeing the bossy, hunting for eggs, counting the new brood, watching the birds, and the return of the wild-fowl, and the blossoming of each flower in its season.

Yes, in that simple life were some desirable things which all our wealth cannot bring to the city mansion. We had pure air, plenty of sun-

shine, natural objects, and delightful scenery. The attachment between ourselves and our domesticated creatures amounted, in some cases, to close friendship. We had flour made from our own grain, fresh vegetables, undiluted milk, luscious cream, sweet butter, new-laid eggs. Sometimes I think that these healthful articles of diet, and the pure air, sunshine, fine scenery, and living face to face and heart to heart with Nature (counting in, also, freedom from society restraints and demands, and city evil influences) are almost too great a price to pay even for all we have since gained. As for time, I never had less than this present situation affords me. If you like, I will send you an account of one of my days. It will not be as entertaining as Mrs. Lammerkin's, but possibly it may help to show you the general evenness of things.

Respectfully yours,

BEACON STREET WOMAN.

XX.

THE BEACON STREET WOMAN'S ACCOUNT.

TO THE BYBURY GATHERING:

I promised you an account of one of my days ; and I will take yesterday — Tuesday, “because,” as Mrs. Lammerkin says, “its events are fresh in mind.”

I arose early, hoping to make my morning visit to the nursery a long one. Upon opening the nursery door, I found the two children, Minnie and Jack, taking in molasses candy, not only at their mouths, but through all the pores of the skin-surface left visible by their clothing. Minnie had ominous news, which she fired at me, so to speak, in one swift utterance. “Last night Jack went down with Norah to get a pan to put the candy in ; and when Norah was finding the pan, she found some bread and cake and sugar, done up in a paper, and Norah asked Margaret” — the laundress — “and Margaret told Norah that cook

put them there to carry away out: it wasn't the first time!" Now this cook had been with us long enough to learn our ways, our likes and our dislikes, and by many preachments I had brought her almost up to the point of considering it a duty to cook healthfully. Neat, quick, capable — but no matter! she must go; and I must again receive into my house a stranger; one whose character and capabilities were uncertain.

I promised the children another visit, and went to have a private talk with Margaret. She confirmed the story, and told me where I should find another package rolled up in cook's shawl, which package I saw. After breakfast I spoke to cook, and gave her the customary week's warning; cook flew into a rage, and left the house in less than two hours; she probably suspected the informant, for she told Norah to tell me that Margaret kept a paper of washing-powder hid away, and used it in every washing. As it looks reasonable that chemicals which take out the dirt will likewise take out the clothes, I sternly refuse to buy washing-powder; Margaret, therefore, must have bought it herself. But discretion bid me refrain from giving warning, for I knew that our dinner that day depended upon the exertions and good-will of Margaret and the

chamber-girl, aided by as much of my own assistance as circumstances might allow me to furnish ; besides, another laundress might bring another package of washing-powder.

The children were vociferous in their calls, but I had to stay below long enough to hold a kitchen consultation about the servants' dinners and our own. Upon going up-stairs, I found my husband in the hall, awaiting my coming with some impatience, for he had to catch a certain car, at a certain point, or lose a certain man. He said he had forgotten to tell me that his aunt Julia had sent him word that she was coming soon, and wished us to fix the time. He must write certainly by the four P. M. mail. I could not, at that moment, with his hand upon the door-knob, think just what were our engagements ; but said I would call at his office on my way to the Intelligence Office. He tore down the steps, nearly upsetting a woman by the name of Simmons, just then coming up-steps with a bundle. Mrs. S. is a poor and not very capable woman, who does the plainest of my sewing. I examined what she had done, suggested some improvements in her style, and looked up work for another bundle. She left just as the expressman arrived with a written list of articles

needed by my daughter who is away at school, and is to act in tableaux. While I was collecting these, the postman came. The children were at the head of the stairs. I sent them to the nursery, with promises, and picked up my letters; but before I could open them, the door-bell rang, and I was told that Mrs. Berry wished to see me. Mrs. B. having once been my nurse, feels privileged to ask various and frequent favors. This time, she wished my help in getting her into the Old Woman's Home. She said she supposed that as I had plenty of time, it wouldn't be much of a job for me to see the directors. I promised to do all I could for her. After she had gone I read my letters:—

“DEAR MADAM:

The Dramatic Exhibition in aid of the Orphan's Home takes place Wednesday evening. Knowing that you have both the will and the time to do good, I enclose twelve tickets, hoping that you may be able to dispose of them.”

“MY DEAR MRS. ENBURY:

Poor Carterston! His is a decided case of genius struggling with poverty. A few kind words, and especially a few purchasers, will work wonders for him. He must be brought into notice. I promised to take some of my friends Tuesday afternoon to see his pictures. Do come! Don't forget that you are to lunch with me to-morrow. I have invited Mrs. E. and Miss L. C. expressly on your account.”

" DEAREST AND BEST MRS. ENBURY :

You remember that charming Mrs. Coleman who so perfectly delighted you when you were in Chicago. She will be in Boston Tuesday and Wednesday, at Hotel Brunswick. I told her you would be only too glad to take the wings of the morning, or else of the afternoon,—do afternoons have them?—and fly to welcome her. Of course you will show her the Lions, that is, the high-toned ones, especially the æsthetic ones, and invite her to your lovely home.

P. S. Please tell me, by return mail, everything you know of a light-and-stiff-haired young man, with foreign accent, who figured at your perfectly exquisite parties last winter. I have reasons for asking."

" MRS. ENBURY :

This is to remind you that the committee on Free Evening Schools meets Tuesday afternoon at 3.30 P. M."

Besides these were some family letters, several notes of invitation, and a note from the children's dressmaker, saying that she would be here on Thursday. This reminded me that there was still shopping to be done for them, and also that I was to call at Hovey's that day, at half-past two, to
• have my own dress tried on.

I answered such letters as required answering, then had another kitchen consultation, and then, with a view to the dressmaker, went to look over the children's winter clothes. I was in the agonies

of this research, hurrying to get through in order to gain time to continue the practice of that part of my pastor's discourse which enforced the duty of storing our minds with the best thoughts of the best writers, when a lady's card was brought to me. She is a person I care for, and she came a long distance to see me ; so I went down. My next interruption was from a stylish lady, the wife of my husband's partner ; not a person I care for, but I went down, for fear of giving offence. I have already affronted several ladies by refusing to see them, or by neglecting to call, though in every instance the refusal, or the neglect, was caused either by a pressure of duties or lack of physical strength. After this lady left, I returned to my work, hoping yet to finish that, and do a little reading, and note down a few facts for the Free Evening School committee, before lunch-time. We lunch at half-past one, and dine at six. But presently came Thomas — our man — to say that Mr. Lane was below. Mr. Lane is a reformed drunkard — a poor broken-down man, who is trying to earn an honest living by peddling various small articles. I never let him go without seeing him, for it seems emphatically one of the duties of my situation to show personal kindness to a man like Mr. Lane.

My next call was from Bertha's music teacher. She spoke of Bertha's indolence and carelessness, and asked if I could not sit in the room during her hours of practice. Not every mother could do this, but as I had plenty of time, etc., etc.

Just as the music teacher left, there came a poorly-dressed, modest-appearing youth, who said that he understood we had some rare pictures, and would I permit a stranger — who sometimes dabbled in Art himself — the privilege of examining them? "With pleasure," I said, and meant it; but not knowing what might be his peculiarities, I remained in the room. During his visit there came a young woman asking what encouragement I could give her in her plan of opening a school in our vicinity. After her, two callers, young friends of mine, who are forming a German class, and wish my daughter Amy to become a member. Next a boy, with a scrap of paper hastily written on with lead pencil: —

"That poor Mrs. Haynes will be turned out unless something is done immediately. We must not let a good woman like her suffer. I am flat with sick headache. Can't you see her this afternoon? I can't think of any one who is so likely to have the time as you are."

Upon the heels of this messenger came the

French woman who is to embroider our new curtains, bringing patterns and stitches for me to examine. Then came the postman with another letter. We have frequent letters of this sort, and please do not think that it is not a pleasure to comply with such requests, for it is. But even pleasures take time.

“DEAR AUNT:

Mother wants to know if you will be kind enough to just step into that place in Washington Street, that advertises goods so cheap, and see if they've got anything good for her a winter dress, if they have, to get one and send it by express, C. O. D. and she will pay you back the money it costs. She wants one that'll be suitable for her age, but not too dull. She wants one that will do to wear to meeting the first of it, and then put on afternoons. They advertise they're all wool, so don't get cheated. And hadn't you just as lief do an errand for me? One of the girls I go with is going to get married, and I mean to get her a wedding present. I want something that is part useful and part ornamental. You can use your own judgment. About price, I don't want to go too high, and then again I don't want to be mean. We are no kin, but we are very intimate, and mother thinks I ought to go about as high as I should for a second cousin. When cousin Anna was married — she's my own — I gave her a sugar spoon, so you can judge something by that. It was solid. Mother's dressmaker's coming the last of the week. She says she wouldn't ask you — and no wouldn't I — if she thought 'twould be any put out to you, but she knows you have lots

of time, and are always going by the shops, but she'll be much obliged to you all the same — and so shall I.

P. S. Sammy's got a composition to write, and he wants to know, when you're going by the Public Library, if you won't just step in and see how many kinds of Deers there are,—meaning animals,—and where they belong, and what their principal habits are, for he's going to try for the prize."

This account is already so long that I must give the remainder hurriedly, and in an abrupt style, which I pray you to excuse. Made notes of my niece's errands; spent twenty minutes with the children — some things in their talk convinced me that they are getting from Norah much that is bad; lunched early, by myself, drove down town, and called at my husband's office. He had stepped out to meet a man, but had left a note asking me to wait, as he wished me to go with him to see a shoemaker who makes shoes of a kind likely to fit Jack, who has weak ankles. He informed me that he had been under the business necessity of asking a gentleman to dinner that day. Waited for husband five minutes. Looked in newspaper to find number of the cheap store on Washington Street. Wrote note concerning Aunt Julia, also saying that I was obliged to leave, and that I would see about Jack's shoes the next day or day after.

Went directly to the Intelligence Office. Long detention. Reached Hovey's late ; another woman trying on ; must wait a few minutes ; stepped below to look at goods ; not quite enough of kind selected ; clerk ran up to hunt a whole piece, stayed a great while ; up-stairs again, another woman trying on ; made appointment for next day ; drove to North End, saw poor Mrs. Haynes ; long detention there. Drove to Chambers Street — committee-meeting nearly over : stated some facts and heard some. Drove to Tremont Street, and looked in at Carterston's studio to say that I would come next day or day after. Drove to Hotel Brunswick, calling at cheap store on the way. While going up the Hotel Brunswick steps, recollected that I had promised to be home at half-past five to inspect and give a few last touches to the dinner ; consulted watch : just time to reach home (decided that afternoons do have wings). Saw the Chicago Charmer, gave reasons for haste, engaged her to dine with us next day ; drove home, found some things going badly, but the essentials rightly, ordered dinner, delayed fifteen minutes ; ran up to my room, made myself presentable ; ran down-stairs, introduced to two gentlemen guests.

Movement to dining-room, loud ring at the

door-bell, a summons to the reception room, Aunt Julia with travelling-bag. Said she saw notice of meetings to begin next day, so thought she would start and come. Knew it couldn't be any put out where there was so much house-room and so much help kept. Hoped I would go to some of the meetings with her. Dear, good woman ! I shall do my best to go to some of the meetings with her. And here let me say that it would break my heart if she and others of our relatives should stay away for fear of giving us trouble. I want them to come ; it gives me real pleasure to oblige them in any way ; but, in making out this account, it is necessary, if possible, to give a specimen of all the duties incident to my present position. This is not possible. Their number is legion. They diverge and converge, and clash, and crowd and run over each other. In a large family like ours, every member of which must be kept, so to speak, up to the level of the situation, demands upon the mother are incessant. In a large establishment like ours there is always something in some department which needs my personal and instant attention. Among the large number of servants required by such an establishment, there are always some who cannot be borne with, or who must be borne with. In a

large acquaintance like ours, are always some, usually many, to whom and from whom calls and invitations are due. In a large city like ours, are always coming and going those who really need our kind attentions. Also, a city like ours has always a class of unfortunates, who, for humanity's sake, ought to be dear to us; people crushed by poverty or ignorance, or sin, whose claims upon us are none the less strong that they are powerless to urge those claims.

My account is hastily written, and therefore imperfect; but it may serve to show what I meant by the general evenness of things. Where much is given, much is required, whether of wealth, or genius, or power to rule.

[Signed] BEACON STREET WOMAN.

XXI.

SOCIETY.— A FEW MORE WORDS FROM BEACON STREET.

TO THE BYBURY GATHERING :

Ladies and Gentlemen :— Before sending you my account, I read it to my husband.

“Pity the sorrows of a poor rich woman !” he exclaimed, at the end.

“It is very well to say that,” I answered ; “but who will do it? The destitute classes get pity and help and advice. But who will pity us — ameliorate our sorrows — devise plans for our relief?”

“You ladies must form an Amelioration Society,” said he. “Here’s a suggestion for you to start with: Let each lady have a certain day, or part of a day, in which to receive callers, and refuse to see them at other times.”

“I tried that way, for a while,” said I ; “but it had its disadvantages. The ceremonious callers, with nothing particular to say — and saying it —

and the people whom I was anxious to see, were liable to come together. And some of these latter had often on that day engagements of their own. Some of them lived out of town; coming in at such times as suited their convenience or necessities. If they did not happen to hit my day, I missed seeing them."

"Here is another plan," said husband. "It may not wipe away your sorrows entirely, but it will ameliorate them. Suppose it were an established rule, that, up to the hour of—say twelve, the lady of the house shall not be interrupted with callers, except in extreme cases? Suppose it were generally understood that, until the time agreed upon, her time is given to her family and her own pursuits? At any rate, this would leave you some hours free from the merely ceremonious callers, with their nothing in particular to say."

"A very good idea," said I. "But I wish we weren't obliged to have this kind of callers, nor obliged to make ceremonious calls, ourselves."

"Oh! these are all a part of 'society,' you know," said husband; "when we are in 'society,' we must do as 'society' does."

"I don't like the way 'society' is put together," said I. "I wish it might be knocked to pieces and

built up on a different basis. Its present basis is money. Those who can afford to support a certain grand style of living, associate. Suppose a rich man and a poor man, both equally good and bright and companionable, and but little known, move into a place and settle down. The first people — so called — of the place take no notice of the poor man, but to the rich man and his family they are prompt in their attentions. They say to them, practically, ‘You can live in our style, therefore we desire your acquaintance.’ Now, I don’t see the force of this therefore. I don’t think it follows at all that because a lady has a fine house, rich clothing, costly jewels, elegant upholstery, together with silver and china and such, that I should therefore find her a desirable companion, or that any lady, for this kind of therefore, should find me one. Every day, ladies call upon me for no other reason than that I possess all these things, and I call upon them for no other reason than that they possess them. We have little in common. The ideas, the books, the people, the plans which interest me, do not interest them; those which interest them, have no special attractions for me.”

“Yet all human beings have something in common,” said husband.

“You never said a truer thing than that,” said I; “but my point is, the absurdity of dividing human beings into squads, or sets, according to their money. There is no sense in such a division. It is not a natural one. Let those who are naturally attracted come together. At present, ‘society’ stands in the way of this. I know several ladies whose talk would interest me, and help me, too; but I don’t know just how to get those ladies for my associates. There are Mrs. W. and one or two others, who belong to our parish sewing-circle. They dress plainly, and, very likely, do their own work; but they are brimful of ideas and wit and benevolence and good humor; and for in-born delicacy and refinement, I hardly know their equals. I wish they would invite me to their houses.”

“Why don’t you invite them to yours?” husband asked.

“There are objections in the way of that,” said I. “If they should meet with ‘society’ people here, things might not run smoothly. Certain of our acquaintances; polite as they fancy themselves, would treat them with scant civility, speak to them in a patronizing way, make them feel themselves out of place. ‘Society’ politeness often puts me in

mind of a cake my mother once made to give away. The plums were forgotten in the making, and so were stuck into the crust, after the baking. The cake was carried by my little brother, and was received with thanks and admiration. 'But the plums don't go all the way through!' cried my little brother. It is about the same with a great deal of 'society' politeness — the plums don't go all the way through. Politeness of the heart is the kind for me. I wish there were more of it."

"Why don't you invite these desirable ladies by themselves?" husband asked.

"That," said I, "would look like a sort of fencing-off. Their inference might be: 'We are not good enough to come with the rich folk; she has us by ourselves.' And besides, I have no right to invite them. Our slight acquaintance does not warrant me in taking that liberty. I wish I were going to Mrs. W.'s this very evening. Those friends of hers are to be there, and I know what they are meaning to talk about: it is a subject in which I am deeply interested. Their evening has an idea to it. But what is my evening to be? I go in gorgeous array, and meet other women in gorgeous array. They look at my clothes, and I look at theirs. We talk politely about nothing. The

rooms are spacious, the furnishing magnificent, the lights brilliant; the dresses elegant, the manners are polished, every voice has the true society accent; but, somehow, the whole thing is unsatisfying. There is no idea to it, no depth — it is all surface work. 'The plums don't go all the way through.'

"But evenings would be too prosy if they all had ideas to them," said husband; "we don't want to be always pondering upon serious matters; we want some fun."

"The very thing!" said I. "In speaking of evenings with ideas to them, I meant evenings with something really enjoyable. This something need not always be serious. Wit, humor, bright talk, spirited games, any evening which gave us these, would have an idea to it. These are plums, and of a good kind, too. But some of us don't often get them. We are hedged in from them by 'society' red tape, 'society' style, 'society' manners and customs. And this 'society' is held together by money. The society which is held together by money or position, is not society at all. It is only a coming in contact. We meet, not heart to heart, but purse to purse. I wish matters were so arranged that those interested in the same ideas and objects, and who are otherwise mutually attracted,

might come together. Where two people are conversing, each responsive to the other, each getting something from the other, each drawn to the other by qualities of mind and character, what difference can it make that one has a hundred thousand dollars, and the other not a hundred? This consideration has no bearing upon the matter whatever."

"To be sure it hasn't," said husband; "but your new kind of society, your society based on the broad foundation of ideas and character and natural attraction, will not be built up in our day. Gold is king, and there are few who will not bow before it."

"I know it," said I; "and I do think this universal deference to wealth is abominable! In the case of the rich man and poor man, supposed just now, the two were represented as being, in other respects, equal. Let us suppose the poor man to be exceptionally worthy and intelligent and companionable, and the rich man exceptionally unworthy and stupid and unattractive, perhaps immoral. To him, still, will be given the attentions and the deference of those first people; that is, generally speaking."

"True," said husband; "but I want to make a point here. This universal deference, of which we

“speak, is it paid wholly to the money? Is it not paid partly to the skill and energy by which the money was gained?”

“There may be something in this,” said I; “still, a man who, after having amassed a fortune, is reduced to poverty, even if it be through causes beyond his control, is not usually courted, and fawned upon and deferred to; and, on the other hand, the man who gains vast wealth by merely inheriting it, is not usually slighted or avoided.”

“Well, I have another point,” said husband. “In the case of your rich man, the attentions and the deference would have come not only from these first families, but from the second, third, fifth, tenth. These would all show by manners, speech and actions, their own exalted opinion of wealth. Even your Mrs. W., good and bright and delightful and superior as she is, if sitting by us at this moment in familiar conversation, would be sure to betray, in some way, that she considered the familiarity an honor to herself,—and all because we are rich, and she is not.”

“If she supposed that we ourselves so considered it, she would do us a wrong,” said I.

“That is one of the wrongs which many of the rich have to suffer,” said husband. “They are sup-

posed to feel grander than they do feel, to think more of money and less of merit than they do think. But even some rich people have common sense."

"Still, as a general thing," said I, "I think that rich people have given poor people cause to feel as you say Mrs. W. would feel."

Our talk was interrupted here; but I wish your Gathering would take up this subject of deference to wealth, and either talk about it, or have a paper written upon it. I would like exceedingly to get your views of the matter.

Very truly yours,

BEACON STREET WOMAN.

XXII.

GO INTO THE HOUSE WHEN IT RAINS.

A PAPER READ AT A BYBURY GATHERING BY
THE BYBURY SCHOOLMA'AM.

I HAVE been asked (said Miss Hunt) to comply with Mrs. Enbury's suggestion, and write something on the subject of Deference to Wealth.

You will find my text in the last part of an old saying: "Go into the house when it rains." The discourse will not start from its text, but will arrive at it.

Mrs. Enbury, in her last communication, spoke of "society" people, as a class, fenced in, set apart. This reminded me of a remark I once heard made by a 'society' young lady. She was past the first flush of youth, well educated, cultured, and, to a considerable degree, scientific. I mention these as being conditions under which one might expect to find the gold of common sense. We were fellow-boarders, and I really felt grateful to her for af-

fording me so much entertainment. The way in which she graduated her manners, for instance, was vastly amusing. To those above her in the "society" scale she was deferential; to her equals, cordial; to those a very little below, affable; to those just outside the charmed circle, condescending; to those far outside, frigid.

But now comes the curious part of the matter. The very people who laughed at or were affronted at her for looking down on them did themselves look down on others, and these on others, and these on others, and so on. And this is the case generally. The kind of people who rank number two, or lower, in the city, are often among the number ones of the towns, associating on equal terms only with those of their own social standing, and patronizing, or condescending to, or holding aloof from, the lower grades, so called. Either directly or indirectly their children are taught to consider themselves as being in some way set apart. They must walk and talk and play and study only with their set. There must be separate schools for them—select, private. If this were to secure more satisfactory teaching, well and good. But often the avowed object is that our children need not associate with everybody's children. Now a friend of

mine, who has taught schools made up of our children and schools made up of everybody's children, tells me that the average of character was about the same in both. There was no despicable trait, no wickedness, no vice even, among the latter that was not also found among the former. It is true that among everybody's children may be found some who are rough in speech and manners, but these startling and repulsive exhibitions are more likely to repel than to attract our children. The worst danger comes not from these, but from evil influences which work unnoticed.

By this fencing off at school, and by certain other ways, our children, and especially our girls are made to grow up into the belief that they are formed of a superior kind of clay, and this belief affects their behavior even on occasions when they and everybody's children meet on what is supposed to be common ground. A country town needs, say a new hall, or a clock, or a fountain, and to complete the necessary funds, "sociables" are held, which the whole town is asked to attend and support, the idea being that all who do attend come together sociably and on an equal footing. Among the girls present are some of our children, now in the beginning of their teens. It is curious to ob-

serve how, even at that tender age, they show the spirit of caste. It is shown in various ways: by smiles, glances, and rude whisperings; by a gathering up of the skirts when any of the "low" people come near, and by a marked avoidance of contact with "low" people, whether in sitting, standing, or dancing.

Usually they are encouraged in this behavior by home influences, if not by direct home teachings. Says dainty little Miss Geraldine Matilda X., in family circle next morning:

"That great lubberly, stupid Dick Hopkins, that used to work in our garden, asked me to dance with him! The idea! Of course I refused."

"Not quite the thing, perhaps, in a social assemblage," says pa, "but I don't much blame you."

"One has to meet that sort of people in promiscuous gatherings," says ma.

"He had on quite good-looking clothes, but nothing will ever be made of him," says Auntie.

Now if this stupid and lubberly Dick had been the son of a millionaire Miss Geraldine Matilda would probably not have refused to dance with him, or if she had, the home authorities would not have sanctioned the refusal.

"Why, my dear, he can't help his looks, you

know. He may not be quite as bright as some, but he should not be slighted on that account. We ought to be careful of people's feelings. One should not think of one's own pleasure altogether."

Excellent sentiments! Far too excellent to be restricted to the narrow limits of a clique. Applied to the Dick Hopkins case they might be expressed somewhat in this way: "It is better that one should suffer fifteen minutes' discomfort, or even to soil one's gloves, than to run the risk of hurting a person's feelings."

Yes, the application of these sentiments should be as wide as humanity. "Behind every face is a heart, you know" — emphasis on second word. This takes in all: the stupid, the ungainly, the poverty-stricken, even the wicked. Behind every face is a heart to feel. Those who perceive this truth and are guided by it need never study the art of politeness. Their politeness will not be an art; it will be natural. It will show itself spontaneously, and to the lowly as well as to the lofty. A rose by the side of a ditch is still a rose, and can't be anything less. So the politeness of a man or a woman, or a schoolgirl or a schoolboy, if it be genuine, will reveal itself in the hovel as surely as in the palace.

“I hear your brother is going to build a house; can he afford it?” asked a well-to-do lady of a shop girl with whom she had a slight acquaintance. The lady would not have presumed to ask such a question of a person of her own standing, supposing the degree of acquaintanceship to have been the same. This assumption of superiority is often seen in the behavior of those who are endeavoring to assist the poor by visiting, by free evening schools, free entertainments, etc. The I-am-better-than-thou spirit shows itself in every tone, look, word, and movement. They reach out a helping hand, but they make a very long arm, in doing it. They feel for the poor, but not with them.

I have a friend who supports herself and her mother by sewing. A gentleman of her town — a smooth, affable gentleman, punctilious in etiquette within certain social limits — called to see her on a matter of business, and kept his hat on during the whole interview. She had not money enough to raise it from his head. What a lever money is, to be sure! My friend is not a person to be disturbed by anything of the sort; but oh! this spirit of caste, how I do hate and detest it! It is not confined to the wealthy. Dick Hopkins and his set and the shop girl and her set have each, probably, a set

below them of whom they speak as that sort of people. In complaining of the caste spirit, we are much more likely to look above to see how it works down upon ourselves, than below to see how it works from ourselves down upon others.

But, speaking of deference to wealth, did you ever notice how, in a country town, the opinion of this or that rich man is quoted from mouth to mouth? "Squire X. says thus and so." This is enough to insure "thus and so" a respectable consideration. Squire X. belongs to the number ones, and, though he may possess even less judgment, learning, and intelligence than some of the number twos, threes and fours, yet the light from his gold shines upon his opinion and so illuminates and transfigures it that it seems worthy of all admiration. A bow, a smile, a handshake, from the great man, how some of his poorer fellow mortals enjoy them, and boast of them, and treasure the remembrance of them! And, on the other hand, the slights he gives—often unintentionally, such, for instance, as absence of recognition on the street, how much is made of them! Coming from each other they would scarcely be noticed, but coming from him they rankle and fester, and are seldom forgotten. All these—the keen enjoyment, the

boasting, the rankling, the festering — betray deference to wealth. "A man's a man, for a' that," and character makes the man, and if you divide the community according to character the dividing line will not run horizontally along any one level, but up and down, cutting right through caste boundaries, from low to high and high to low.

All very well, you say, and we knew it before, but this absurd deference still remains. The evil exists; how will you cure it?

The only cure I can think of is self-respect. I don't mean self-sufficiency or self-assertion, or anything of that sort. I mean a respect for and a devotion to one's own objects in life. If we are sure of our own integrity, and if we have consecrated our lives to certain worthy objects, what will it matter to us whether a rich man's hat is in his hand or on his head, or whether a rich woman invites us or slights us? We are living not for their notice or deference, but for purposes of our own. From their slights, frowns, incivilities, rudenesses, condescensions, insults, we can always take refuge in ourselves. We can go into the house when it rains. The whole of the saying is, "He doesn't know enough to go into the house when it rains." Just so. There are some who do not know enough;

yes, and some who have no house. People, I mean, whose lives are not consecrated to any worthy purposes; who have set up for themselves no high mark to attain; who take no thought for the welfare of others; whose chief anxiety is to make a good appearance, to keep in the fashion, to support a certain style; who watch and wait to take their cue from the number ones, endeavoring always to conduct as certain of these would think was proper, never daring to assert their own opinions — perhaps having none to assert. That people like these are elated or depressed by the smiles or slights of the X. family is unavoidable, for they have nothing in themselves to fall back upon. But the other kind — those who dare to have ideas of their own, who have their life-work marked out, and who are striving to do something really worth doing both for themselves and for others — these will live and move and have their being, and find happiness, too, independent of 'Squire X., or Madam X., or of Miss Geraldine Matilda.

XXIII.

COMMONALITIES. — A PAPER READ AT A BYBURY
GATHERING, BY MARY ANN POTTER.

WHEN Miss Hunt told us, the other evening, that the average of character is about the same in the rich and the poor, it occurred to me that the same thing might be said of enjoyment, and not only so, but that often the enjoyments of the rich and of the poor are alike in kind. Perhaps it is worth while to make a note of these; yes, it is. Anything is worth while which helps to knock down partition walls and bring people together on the common ground of humanity.

To begin with, suppose we mention the own folks pleasure. How delightful it is when own folks meet at family gatherings! At Thanksgiving, for instance; Thanksgiving at the old farmhouse. A homely place, but still home, and dear to many for that reason. Those who can do so go the day before and have the pleasure of watching,

and waiting, and wondering. Will Aunt Celia's baby get well soon enough? Can Cousin Ben leave his store in the city? Will Aunt Anna's school close in time? Will Uncle Jack take pains to travel two days and a night?

When the day actually arrives, the excitement is at its height. Not quite at its height, though, for it grows higher with every fresh arrival. Aunt Celia's baby did get well, and here he is, rosy as a posy, and children of all sizes, from two feet high to six feet inclusive, are admiring and worshiping—grandpa and grandma wiping misty spectacles—and Ben did leave his store, and Aunt Anna's school did close in time, and at the last moment, before dinner, Uncle Jack, who has been given up, but who did take pains to travel two days and a night, bursts in, unexpectedly, and joy abounds, and those who have no spectacles wipe their eyes instead.

There are similar goings on at Squire X.'s, the great man of the town, but, though in these two places the surroundings differ, the kind of happiness enjoyed does not.

Across the field stands a small, dingy house, scarcely more than a hovel. The old couple who live there are awaiting the arrival of their two

daughters, who work out at a distant town. The father and mother are as poor as poverty, but by much scrimping they have managed to place upon their table, that day, something that will pass for a Thanksgiving dinner. It is almost noon. Oh! if they should not come after all. But they will. There they are! Father and mother meet them at the door. What? misty glasses again? Yes; tears of joy are here, too. Poverty cannot keep those down. They well up from the heart, and "behind every face is a heart, you know."

But, besides these meetings of kin with kin, there are the delightful seasons spent with relations who are no kin at all; that is, no flesh and blood kin. Heart and soul relations these are, and the nobler the hearts and souls the more intensely delightful the relationship. Among the enjoyments common to all we must give high place to the kind which comes from the intercourse of these no kin relations; congenial spirits, interested in the same ideas, actuated alike by unselfish purposes, devoted alike to noble objects, showing the same enthusiasm, the same worship of genius, the same delight in the beautiful, and the true, and the grand, the same sympathy with suffering in all its forms, and the same longing to relieve it. Rela-

tionship of this kind needs no Family-Tree, no attested record of birth and parentage; it is revealed by simple tokens, a glance of the eye, a flush of the cheek, a modulation of the voice, a pressure of the hand.

Along with these precious no kin relations, whom we have the delight of meeting face to face, must be mentioned others of the same kind, whom we never saw, and from whom we are separated by space or time, perhaps by a great deal of one or the other; perhaps by thousands of miles, or by thousands of years. But we have been introduced to them by the inventor of printing, and we ought to go down on our bended knees to him for that same. Through his letters of introduction we are made acquainted with, oh! how many, whom, because of their purity, or their sweetness, or their greatness, or their sacrifices for humanity, it is a blessing to know. What an inspiration to us are their lives, these noble ones, these royal ones of the race! Obliterate all knowledge of them, and how poor and barren the world would seem. The degree of our relationship to them depends upon the degree to which our natures respond to theirs; but there is seldom a human heart which feels no thrill of pleasure at a tale of noble men and noble deeds,

and this pleasure is of the same kind, whether the heart throbs beneath cloth of gold or homespun gray. It makes up a part of the enjoyment derived from books, and this, by the way, should be mentioned as one by itself among our enjoyments, common to all. A well-told story; a beautiful thought beautifully expressed; a keen stroke of wit; a delicious bit of humor; interesting knowledge, whether of ourselves or of anything else in creation; the pleasure got from these is not graded on any money scale. And think what a pleasure it is! But we cannot. We can form no idea of the blank which would be left were this suddenly stricken out. Even in fiction there are characters; yes, many characters whose loss would make the world poorer.

The enjoyment of beauty, as shown in nature, is another with which money has no concern. It is spontaneous. In looking at a rose, for instance, or a pond lily, or a spray of mayflowers, we do not stop to decide whether we will or will not admire these. The admiration comes of itself. It is the response which our sense of the beautiful gives to beauty. We are pleased without our consent, and certainly without any help from our purses. And as with flowers so with other natural objects, the

tracery of branches against the sky, the curve of the stream, the verdure of its banks, the varied picture of woods, and fields, and hills, the blue of the heavens, the grandeur of the ocean, the glory of sunsets.

I don't know why has been kept to the last the highest and best of all enjoyments, that of giving enjoyment. If all others fail, this endures. Though we have no kindred, no congenial associates, no books, though from excess of grief, we may say of beautiful things, "there is no pleasure in them," yet, the pleasure of giving pleasure, and of being of service to others, is still left us; and so long as there are the sick who need attentions, the afflicted who need sympathy, the unfortunate who need to be comforted, the downfallen who need encouragement, and lonely ones in need of companionship, nobody's life need be joyless. Even the invalid, confined to his bed or his chair, may still take thought for others, and may, unconsciously, be of service to others, by making himself an example of patience and often of cheerfulness.

At the close of this paper Miss 'Cindy started a conversation upon it, by exclaiming, "Now, it seems to me that Mary Ann's list of enjoyments takes in the very best ones there are!"

XXIV.

FASHION.

“WHEN we were little girls,” said Miss ‘Cindy, “Mary Ann and I used sometimes to amuse ourselves by supposing. We supposed that certain things did not exist, and then imagined the consequences. Suppose there were no ocean, no moon, no birds, no school-teacher, no grass, no stores. Now suppose that we grown-up children amuse ourselves by supposing what if there was no such thing as Fashion !”

“We should lose lots and lots of pretty things and pretty ways of doing things,” said Miss Luce.

“And dear me !” cried Mattie Johnson, “what a muddle we should be in ! Nobody would know how to have anything made, we should all go on at our own heads, and as likely as not make frights of ourselves. It won’t do to run a tilt against beauty. You know Mary Ann’s paper said we are made to like it, and must like it.”

“But beauty and fashion are not the same,” said Mary Ann; “many of the fashions seem ugly until we have become used to them.”

“Still, it must be allowed that we do gain some really pretty things by this everlasting striving after something new,” said Miss Luce; “think of the lovely artificial flowers, and ribbons, and shades of ribbons, and dress goods, and shades of dress goods!”

“I don’t admit that we need be under obligation to fashion for these,” said Miss Hunt. “Even were there no such thing as fashion, the makers of such articles would be constantly trying to produce new kinds, just as painters are constantly trying to produce new pictures. The painter strives to make also a better picture. And no doubt these others would strive more than they now do to improve in their work, if the demand were not chiefly for something new. So the chances are that if there were no such thing as fashion we should get more of real beauty in design and workmanship than we get now. And there would be no lack of variety, for all the numerous designers and artists would have each his or her own ideas to work out, and besides there would be very many different tastes to please.”

“No such thing as fashion?” said Eunice Hartman, speaking low, and knitting her brows thoughtfully. “Excuse me for repeating your words, but I cannot conceive the possibility of such a condition. No watching and waiting to find out what they are going to wear? No labor of bringing old clothes into new style? Entire deliverance — entire — from the fear of the shame of looking old-fashioned? Buy and make our clothes just as suits our own means, our own tastes, our own convenience, and even wear our old ones as long as we please? Enjoy all this freedom and not be called singular? Why, it is utterly beyond me to imagine myself being let loose to an extent like that!” and Eunice drew a long breath at the bare idea of such an escape.

“This is what we may call the rule of individuality in dress,” said Miss Hunt. “Governed by this rule all persons will clothe themselves as they individually can, or please, or must. When there’s no such thing as fashion it will not be singular to follow this rule; it will be exceedingly plural, for everybody will do so.”

“I wish everybody were doing so now,” said Miss ‘Cindy. “I think a walk through the streets of a town would be far more entertaining if the

men and women were dressed very much unlike, than now when they dress very much alike."

"I remember reading of Thoreau," said Miss Hunt, "that once when he gave a tailor directions for making him a suit of clothes he demurred, and said: 'But they don't make them that way.' 'I know it,' said Thoreau, 'but they're going to.'"

"While we are supposing," said Mary Ann, "let us suppose what would be the gain if the time and thought and labor spent in cities, towns and villages in keeping up with the fashions were set free and given to better things; given, say, to literature, to the study of the sciences, to out-doors employments, to painting, music, sculpture, to works of benevolence. All these to be mingled with fun and jolly good times. But so enormous a gain as that is beyond our feeble supposings. Even those who are rich enough to hire every stitch of their sewing done are concerned in this supposition, for they are obliged to consult fashion plates and visit openings and search out and select materials and choose between styles and give orders; and if such people would gain by this imagined freedom how much more would those who must themselves ply the needle and tread the treadle? Remember we are not now speaking of

dress in itself, but of following the forever-changing fashions. It is a sort of duty to give a reasonable amount of time and thought and work to the choosing and the making of our garments. A dress ought to be a thing of beauty."

"And a joy forever," said Miss Cindy; "that is, a reasonable forever, but now it is a joy only while the fashion lasts. What a provoking slavery this fashion slavery is, to be sure! Fools lead the way and the wise are obliged to follow. Sometimes the wise rebel at first, but Fashion isn't a bit concerned at their rebellion. She knows they'll submit sooner or later. I wonder if this state of things will ever change."

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Hunt; "there are forces at work which must change it. At school our philosophy class used to recite this rule, or axiom: 'Where one thing is another cannot be.' According to this rule, why, if another thing pushes out one thing, one thing will disappear. And this is what is taking place now. Fashion worship among women is being pushed out by something better. Thanks to the influence of what is called the Woman's Rights Movement, women are waking up and looking up and working up. They are beginning to have higher aims

than the aim of keeping in the fashion. They are becoming scholars, writers, preachers, lawyers, physicians, artists. Women who are mothers are beginning to realize what that high calling demands from them in the way of culture and enlightenment and preparation. Please observe, that according to our philosophy rule it is simply impossible that a woman who is devoting herself to any of these high purposes can at the same time be devoting herself to fashion. She will press forward to her goal, and not be turned aside by trivial considerations. A person bound to Washington does not stop at the way-stations, or take this or that little branch railway."

"I think the change you speak of has more than begun," said Eunice. "The advance guard have already made it. When I was in the city last winter I saw a number of women physicians, women students, women preachers and women artists, who were behind the fashion in dress, yet nobody laughed at them for this. It seemed to be generally understood that they were occupied with matters of more vital importance. Perhaps sometime it will be as generally understood that a woman or a man who dresses always in the height of fashion, has no higher ambition than to do so."

“A fish on dry ground, when it jumps, always jumps toward the water,” said Allen Hartman, “’tis a good deal so with folks. Each one jumps toward his or her own element.”

“But sometimes this matter of dress stands in their way,” said Miss Hunt, “and particularly if they are not strong. I know a young girl who began a course of study in a certain school. Her poverty showed itself in her dress. Not having strength enough to bear up under the slights which, to the shame of the others be it spoken, she had to endure on that account, she left the school.”

“I’ll tell you what is needed,” said Mr. Johnson. “There needs to be a Common-sense Factory established. It must be large enough to turn out common-sense enough for two kinds of people: the kind who cannot afford to wear expensive clothes, and the kind who can. When this second kind get their share they will know better than to judge people by a dress standard, and when the first kind get their share they will know better than to try to dress like the second kind, or to feel ashamed that they cannot.”

“And when everybody is supplied with this common-sense,” said Mary Ann, “then everybody will dress according to their own tastes or means

or convenience, and nobody will criticise anybody for doing so."

"This brings us down to the same old ground of individuality," said Eunice, "the same, I mean, to which Miss Hunt's paper brought us, namely, that each person must have his or her own purposes in life, and not be turned aside from it by slights or ridicule."

"Speaking of ridicule," said Miss Cindy, "I should like to say to those men who laugh at women for inventing and following absurd fashions, ridicule is not going to stop this thing. It must be undermined and crowded out by something better."

"One way of crowding it out," said Eunice, "would be this: Let every growing-up girl, just as well as every growing-up boy, choose some particular calling or pursuit—the higher the better—and resolve to do her best in that calling or pursuit."

XXV.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR TIME?

Reported by a Member.

OUR fashion talk the other evening brought us squarely up to the question — How much time is it right to bestow upon dress? This opened the broader one — What shall we do with our time? which soon narrowed to — What shall the mother do with her time? The mothers especially considered were those who must be occupied with household cares and household work.

“Now let us not theorize,” said Miss ‘Cindy, “let us look at this matter in a practical way. Suppose a woman — some Mrs. X. Y. Z.—is anxious to use her time in doing the very best things for her husband and children, in what ways shall she use it? What are their needs?”

“Food, to begin with,” said one.

“Clothes,” said another.

“A neat and attractive home,” said another.

Then came a moment's pause. Everybody seemed to be asking themselves what the husband and children could possibly need besides food, clothes, and a neat and attractive home.

"What else?" asked Miss 'Cindy.

"Companionship," said Allen Hartman. "Both husband and children need a sympathizing companion."

"And in case of the children," said Mr. Johnson, "the companion must guide and instruct, as well as sympathize."

"It seems to me," said Miss Hunt, "that we are stating these needs in too general a way. Take the first one mentioned—food. In some houses food is provided which does not supply the need. I have sat at tables on which there was scarcely an article fit for food. As one thing after another was passed to me I was constantly reminded of the question little children sometimes ask each other when putting in their mouths some doubtful leaf, or flower, or 'gum': 'Is this good to *swallow*?' I should say that the husband and children need not food merely, but food that is good to *swallow*. Here comes in a use for Mrs. X. Y. Z.'s time."

"The second need needs some kind of specifi-

cations," said Mr. Johnson. "There seems to me to be a good deal of latitude and longitude in the matter of clothes."

"I should say," said Mrs. Eunice Hartman, "that clothing must be clean and whole and tasteful, and not above the means of the family."

"That word 'tasteful' will prove a stumbling-block," said Mary Ann. "Suppose Mrs. X. Y. Z. thinks many flounces tasteful, or many tucks, or braiding, or embroidery, shall she use up time in such kinds of work? You see, we come round to our old puzzle — How much time is it right to spend upon dress?"

"I have an idea," said Miss Hunt, "that our fourth-mentioned need — that of companionship — will help us to solve the puzzle. It strikes me that this need is going have a pretty large claim on the time of our Mrs. X. Y. Z. If Mr. X. Y. Z. is a man of ordinary intelligence, a man interested in the leading movements and projects and ideas and people of the times, then Mrs. X. Y. Z., to be his 'sympathizing companion,' must get a knowledge of these matters, which getting implies the use of some of her time in reading. To me such a use of her time seems an important one, for I have observed that nothing is so great a promoter of

matrimonial happiness as this same 'sympathizing companionship.' "

"And you know the children are concerned here," said Allen; "as was said just now, they must have from their mother not only companionship but guidance and instruction."

"And constant care," said Mrs. Johnson; "care for their health, care for their minds, care for their characters."

"Here, then, is another use for time," said Mary Ann. "Mrs. X. Y. Z. cannot be guide and instructor to her children, unless she uses time in fitting herself for these duties. From the right kinds of reading she will get helpful suggestions and valuable knowledge; but reading will take her time."

"And it will be time well taken," said Miss Hunt; "for suppose our Mrs. X. Y. Z. knows enough of what we call the phenomena of nature to speak to her children entertainingly and instructively of the rain, the clouds, the sunshine, winds, frost, snow, fog, dew, rainbows? or enough of the natural history of plants to speak to her children entertainingly and instructively of the wonders of plant life and plant growth and plant uses, and the beauty and wonderfulness of flowers and their

division into families? or enough of the natural history of live creatures to give her children some knowledge of the habits and instincts of these, their powers of reasoning and other so-called human traits, as affection, jealousy, love of praise, dread of blame, and their intelligence generally? Even this one subject would prove almost inexhaustible, for there would be bird life, you know, and beast life, and fish life, and insect life; think what infinite variety!"

"And think what an excellent thing for the children," said Eunice, "to excite their curiosity in regard to such subjects as these, rather than to let them run loose as it were, and so almost oblige them to seek entertainment in the bad company found in the streets, or in the worse company of the runaways and bandits and pirates and low-toned women of dime novels; or in the frivolities which so often engross the attention of young girls!"

"And another good result of this instructive companionship," said Mary Ann, "would be to establish a mutual bond of interest between mothers and children."

"And a desirable result it is," said Eunice; "I think mothers and children have too little in common."

“And there is biography,” continued Miss Hunt; “suppose our Mrs. X. Y. Z.’s knowledge of biography enables her to entertain her children with a great many incidents in the lives of a great many wise and good and noble and heroic and persistent and energetic and self-sacrificing men and women.”

“Another gain for the children,” said Eunice; “a gain for their characters. The impressions made upon them by this kind of entertainment would probably affect their whole lives for good.”

“And suppose,” Miss Hunt went on, “that she has read enough on the subject of moral training to realize the effects which certain forms of family discipline and the general goings on in the family may have upon character, in some cases teaching deception, in others selfishness, in others injustice, in others hypocrisy, in others vanity, in others rivalry, and so on, and that the ideas thus gained make her exceedingly cautious in her own family management.”

“Very good for the children!” cried Miss ‘Cindy.

XXVI.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR TIME ?

(Concluded.)

"YOU think, then," said Miss Hunt, "that knowledge such as has been mentioned would be a great help to a mother?"

"Help and comfort and support!" exclaimed the young married woman, with emphasis.

"Then one of those best things (the 'best things' a mother can do for her children) we were speaking of is to get some or all of these kinds of knowledge?"

"Certainly, if she can."

"And as reading and study are helps in getting them, reading and study must be counted in among our best things?"

"Yes, indeed!" said the young married woman.

"So far as a knowledge of out-door objects is concerned," said Mrs. Eunice Hartman, "as trees,

plants, flowers, stones, birds, insects, and so forth, there are other helps. Out-door walks with her children would help the mother both to get and to give this knowledge. So one of the best things would be for her to take them to the woods and fields, the sea shore, or river shore, or pond shore, and let them see for themselves the wonders to be found everywhere. Shall our Mrs. X. Y. Z. use some of her time in this way?"

"I — think so," said the young married woman.

"And as for the other kinds of knowledge," said Mrs. Johnson, "the kinds she will need in training up her children, one good way of getting these is for mothers to have regular talking and reading meetings and there tell each other what they have heard, or read, or found out by experience, concerning such matters. If they don't know enough themselves, not even to talk, let them club together and buy the right sort of books and magazines and have them read aloud. Reading is almost sure to start a conversation. I have seen this plan of regular meetings tried, and it worked well."

"Some knowledge of natural history and of literature, and, in fact, of a good many things, might be got by the same means," said Eunice.

"Then one of the best things Mrs. X. Y. Z. can

do for her children," said Miss Hunt, looking at the young married woman, "is to attend meetings of this sort."

"Yes, to be sure it is!" she answered; "but, oh dear, dear, dear! how will she ever get time to read and study, to go to such meetings, and to read and to talk with her children and take walks with them?"

"Just the very question we want to hear," said Miss Hunt; "when it is asked loudly enough and often enough and earnestly enough and anxiously enough and universally enough it will help answer that puzzling question — How much time shall we spend on dress?"

"And other questions, too," said Eunice, "as — How much time shall be spent in unnecessary sewing of any sort; in unnecessary cooking; in unnecessary ironing? This is to be another case of crowding out. The more important will crowd out the less important. It will be a matter of choosing, of balancing. Our Mrs. X. Y. Z. will ask, 'Which is the best thing for my children; that I prepare this mince, get up these fancy dishes, or save the time for books? that I iron these sheets and towels and underclothes "all over just as smooth as glass," or save the time for walks and

talks with the children? that I tuck and ruffle this skirt, or save the time for the Woman's Meetings?' Just as soon as she feels strongly — strongly, mind — the value of the best things she will be constantly saving time for them from things which are not the best."

"I know a Mrs. X. Y. Z.," said Mary Ann, "who not only did this kind of choosing herself but got her child to do it. Sometimes her little girl would come home from school and say, 'Mother, I wish you would put some ruffles on my dresses; the other little girls have ruffles.' Mrs. X. Y. Z. would answer: 'Amy, I will spend this afternoon just as you say; I will put some ruffles on your dress, or I will take you to Central Park — the wild part!' this 'wild part' being Amy's especial delight. It was not always ruffles that was set off against the Park; it was any form of unnecessary work. And the Park was not the only substitute offered, though the substitutes were always worthy ones, and Amy invariably chose them. Her mother knew how to make them attractive. Besides interesting her in what we call natural objects, as has been suggested, she interested her in human objects; as newsboys, beggar children, the very destitute classes, the very ignorant classes, and explained

their needs and made the child see that there was work to do in the world and long to help to do it. Thus, in various ways, things of high degree were brought forward and established in her mind before things of low degree had a chance to occupy the ground."

"Your Mrs. X. Y. Z. was a wise woman," said Eunice, "but I think she might have been wise in another direction as well. We have had a great deal to say of individuality as a remedy for this everlasting and sheep-like following. If we want more of it we must begin with the children, and train them up to it. Your Mrs. X. Y. Z., besides doing what she did, besides teaching the difference between essentials and non-essentials, should have taught her little girl not to expect to have what other little girls have, or to always follow their lead."

"My Mrs. X. Y. Z. being a wise woman and a thoughtful," said Mary Ann, "probably did teach that sensible doctrine."

Here one of the girls brought up one of our old questions. "Speaking of essentials," said she, "don't you reckon beauty and good taste among them?"

"O, yes!" said Eunice; "but you know these are

not dependent upon elaborate trimming. To my eye a plain white dress tied around with a sash — and perhaps finished off with just a bit of a ruffle, or other simple finishing — is prettier for a child than that same white dress tucked or flounced or braided to the waist. It is in better taste, more in keeping with childliness. Let us by all means have beauty and good taste. The elaboration, the time spent for not the best things is what I object to in dress and in cooking.”

“And in ironing!” cried Miss ‘Cindy; “don’t leave that out.”

“And all that has been said of time,” remarked Allen Hartman, “I should think would apply equally well to money, and to strength.”

“Certainly,” said Mary Ann; “Mrs. X. Y. Z.’s time and money and strength must be used for the best things. And this is not a matter of woman’s rights, or woman’s grievances. It is a matter which affects the interests of the whole household, and therefore the whole household are bound to give it serious attention.”

Just at this point there came a startling question from Miss ‘Cindy: “What about Mr. X. Y. Z.?” she cried; “there is a great deal said about the responsibilities of mothers. I should like to know if

fathers have no such responsibilities? Mr. X. Y. Z. has spare time — men generally do have; can he not use some of it to do best things for his children? Is it not his duty to read and talk and sometimes walk with them? Shall he not store his mind with knowledge in order to serve it out to them, and in order to get wisdom for their proper training? Shall not fathers hold counsel together in regard to the education and management of their children? Why should they stand aloof? Mr. X. Y. Z. probably has his evenings. He spends them, often, at the grocery store, if in the country; if in the city, he may drop in at some place of entertainment, or at his Club. And by the way, men's clubs are not, as a general thing, established for family purposes, or in family interests. Why should he not stay at home and gather his children about him and instruct and entertain them in the ways we have been speaking of? There are the same reasons why the father should do this as why the mother should do it. She has been with the children more or less through the day — usually more; cared for their numerous needs, answered their questions, settled their disputes, listened to their complaints, withstood — or given way to — their teasings, borne with their racket, soothed their sorrows, wiped

away their tears. Her basket is filled with their mending or making, which, tired as she is, must be carried on through the evening. He is tired, too, it may be; but his work is done. He has seen little of his children during the day; now is the time for him to make their acquaintance. Now is the time for him to read with them some entertaining and instructive book; to set them thinking; to set them talking; to show them how much there is for them to learn and to do in the world. Or he may share their amusements, join in their games. If it is well for the mother and children to be united by common interests, how much better that the father should join the union."

"Better in every way," said Eunice; "better for the mothers, for the fathers, and for the children."

"Boys and girls brought up in a union of this kind," said Allen, "would be more likely than others to answer our Time question in a satisfactory way. They would be more likely to perceive what are the best things, and to choose them."

"And it seems to me," said Miss Hunt, "that there is scarcely a question to be asked and answered, whether by mothers, fathers, or by young people just starting in life, than — What are the best things to do with our time?"

XXVII.

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

“WE have had a great deal of talk, and good talk, about woman’s slavery to work,” said Mrs. Eunice Hartman, “but it strikes me that we have not yet gone deep enough. Simplifying the work, reducing it, bringing the whole forces of the family to bear upon it, and various other suggestions, though all excellent as palliatives, do not reach the cause of the evil. There is an important first step to be taken, a grand foundation sermon to be preached and practised. The step is to place woman on a level with man. The text for the sermon is equality — equality, I mean, of man and woman.”

“Such equality is out of the question,” said Mr. Johnson, “men and women are different; are born different. There’s the matter of strength, to begin with; men are stronger than women.”

“Yes,” said Eunice, “but we find an equality

among men which is not affected by differences in strength. Take occupation, for instance. As a rule, every man is put in some way of earning his own living. Suppose that in a family are two children, a son and a daughter, the former with a delicate constitution and ordinary powers of intellect, the latter robust, vigorous, and in mental powers above the average. The feeble son chooses an occupation suited to his capacities, and is fitted therefor. The strong daughter settles down to be supported. Here is an inequality, but it is not based upon strength."

"Women ought not to complain of an inequality which favors their side," said Mr. Johnson.

"But does it favor their side?" asked Eunice. "How many young men are there, who, when schooldays are over, would be content with simply being supported?"

"Not many," said Miss 'Cindy; "a young man usually desires to do something himself, to be independent. Besides, he knows that a continuance of the support is uncertain. When the head of the family dies his wealth must often be divided among several, or it may at any time take to itself wings and fly away. I think most young men would consider it a wrong, rather than a favor, if

they had been put in no way of earning a livelihood."

"And daughters are no surer of a lasting support than sons," said Eunice, "even supposing that a wealthy father meets with no business losses, and that he dies leaving to each daughter an independent fortune. How is it invested? In savings banks, in railway, insurance, manufactures or bank stock, in trust with firms, with individuals, in the management of agents? By some great fire, or panic, or fraud, this independent fortune may suddenly vanish. Where then does our supported daughter find herself? Is it a favor, or a wrong, that she is thoroughly skilled in no occupation?"

"But women usually marry, and continue to be supported," said Mr. Johnson.

"No doubt you would admit," said Miss 'Cindy, "that if we could know just which ones would not marry, they ought to have some preparation for supporting themselves?"

"Certainly; by all means," said Mr. Johnson, laughing; "and it would not harm any woman."

"Now it seems to me," said Allen Hartman, "that those who marry need such preparations all the more, for they are liable to be left with children to provide for."

“And even if they are not thus left,” said Miss Hunt, “a knowledge of some money-winning employment would possibly be of use to them. A husband may lose his health, or be unfortunate in business, or be incompetent to support a family. The wife dismisses her help and spends her energies upon pots, pans, mops and brooms, whereas by the knowledge just mentioned she might employ her time in a more pleasing occupation, earn money enough to pay the ‘help,’ and have something left over for the family.”

“But perhaps this occupation would take her from her children,” said Mrs. Johnson; “don’t you think a mother’s first duty is to her children?”

“Certainly I do,” said Miss Hunt, “but cases are possible in which mothers would do even better for their children by leaving them a certain number of hours a day, than by remaining constantly with them. Anyway, it can do no harm, as Mr. Johnson admits, for every woman to get a thorough knowledge of some special trade, profession, or business.”

“It might sometimes prevent them from doing that degrading and unholy thing, marrying for a support,” said Eunice; “and it is needed for another reason. If all husbands were temperate and

faithful this reason would not hold good ; but as all are not, it does. The wife of a drunken and brutal husband often feels compelled to live with him, from the fact that she has no way of maintaining herself and children. The same reason applies in cases where the husband is unfaithful. I read recently of a family in straightened circumstances, the husband pleading poverty, the wife working, saving, denying herself almost the comforts of life. She at last learned that he had been keeping up another establishment, where he supported a mistress. He did not deny having done this. In this case the wife would not have remained with the husband only for her incapacity to do any sort of thing by which she and her children might be clothed and fed. Having been reared as a vine she could not at once become an oak."

"I don't think it is fair to rear women as vines," said Miss 'Cindy, "unless they can be insured something or other to cling to always and forever. Because, you see, when the oak, or the stake, or the trellis, is taken from under, down goes the vine."

"Therefore," said Eunice, "let there be equality ; not likeness, but equality. And as one step towards this, train up the daughters, as well as the

sons, to be self-supporting; not necessarily by men's employments, but by any employments suited to their tastes or capacities."

"There is still another way in which this kind of inequality we have been speaking of deals unfairly with the daughters," said Allen. "Usually, a young man's chosen occupation does something more than support him. It is an education. It draws him out, stimulates him, develops him. He is not content with mediocrity; he wishes to do good work — to be first-rate of his kind. Think of what this requires in the way of general culture as well as special! Even the persistent effort to attain such excellence enlarges and strengthens the faculties. Now, the daughters, in being brought up to no special vocation, lose these developing and educating influences, which I say is not a fair thing!"

"And speaking generally," said Miss Hunt, "when they do 'take up,' as it is called, music, or drawing, or carving, or modeling, or some particular branch of study, it is only a taking up. Seldom does a young girl get a thorough and practical knowledge of any one of these things — a teachable knowledge."

"But what has all this to do with the slavery of

women to housework and sewing-work?" asked Mrs. Johnson.

"Let us see," said Eunice, "if a few thereofes will not enable us to make the connection. Men have special occupations; women have not. The time of a person engaged in a special occupation is very much more valuable than the time of a person engaged in no such occupation, therefore woman's time has come to be considered very much less valuable than man's time; and therefore it is of comparatively little importance how she employs her time, and therefore it may be employed in unnecessary cooking, unnecessary sewing, and other unprofitable ways. Industry, for a man, means either doing something by which he may earn money, or something which may be the means of refinement and advancement and development to others, and the very doing of which is a refinement and advancement and development of himself. Industry for a woman means doing any sort of thing in-doors. So long as her feet or fingers are in motion there, no questions are asked as to the value of what is done. She buys, for instance, a piece of canvas with a flower in the middle, and devotes days and weeks to covering the uncovered threads of her canvas with worsted. Now, if she

would spend that amount of time in designing patterns, combining and harmonizing their colors, thus calling into exercise faculties of a high order, why, then she would have been doing a kind of work valuable for its own sake ; there would have been some effort required, some reaching forward, something in the Excelsior line. As it is, a certain mechanical skill having been acquired, what comes after is only tame repetition. But a woman's time is of no account ; and because it is of no account she flutes and flounces and braids the clothes of herself and her girls ; because it is of no account, she sets forth her table with endless variety and profusion ; because it is of no account her family, old as well as young, clamor for labor-compelling pastries, and ' don't think cake is worth eating unless it is frosted,' as a hard-cooking woman remarked, speaking of her own adult household. So we see how it is that woman has become a slave to unessential sewing-work, and unessential housework ; that is, we partly see. The difference in the valuation of man's time and woman's, is only a part of the inequality mentioned at the beginning. There are yet other differences which our grand foundation sermon will have to expound."

"Before we go farther," said Mary Ann, "I have

a point or two to raise on what has already been said, and particularly on Mr. Johnson's remark, that women after marriage 'continue to be supported.'"

"And I," said Mrs. Johnson, "have a few words to offer in favor of worsted work, and other sewing-work."

"And I," said Miss Hunt, "have something to say in regard to the difference in the money value of woman's time and of man's time."

XXVIII.

FAIR PLAY.

“As Miss Hunt, Mrs. Johnson, and my sister Mary Ann say they have each a word to offer,” said Miss 'Cindy, “suppose they offer their words now. Miss Hunt being the schoolma'am, and a stranger in the place, shall be allowed the first chance.”

“My word is not a new word,” said Miss Hunt, “it concerns money — the money value of woman's time as compared with man's time. You all know there is a difference between these two. You all know that for equal work equally well done, a man and a woman get different prices, and that the man's is much the higher. I have in mind at this moment, a boy's public school, which the master could not control. His place was taken by a woman, who brought order out of disorder, governed the school, and gave satisfaction as a teacher. I need not add that the salary of the efficient woman was much less than that of the inefficient

man. Here is another instance that came within my knowledge: A woman sent articles to an editor under a signature which gave no clue to her sex. He supposed them written by a man, and paid a high price — until he discovered his mistake; then the price was considerably lessened."

"It costs a man more to live than it does a woman. He has to pay higher board than she does," remarked Mr. Chandler.

"It is true," said Miss Hunt, "that in some kinds of boarding-houses a woman gets her meals for perhaps a dollar a week less than a man; but to have fair play, this reduction ought to run all the way through. If the rule, less pay to women, is a general one, then the rule, less pay from women should be as general. They should get their railway and horse-car tickets for less, their newspapers and magazines for less, their pew-rents for less, their room and house-rents for less, their seats at concerts, lectures and theatres for less. It is a poor rule that won't work both ways, therefore this rule is a poor one. For women, while not getting full price — that is, man's price — for their work, pay full price for travelling, for entertainments, for religion, for reading-matter, full rent, and full taxes upon property."

“When the rule is equal pay for equal work,” said Eunice, “what Mr. Johnson would call marrying for a support will be much less common. Women will be more independent. At present a large majority of women who work for hire get comparatively small pay, and therefore must live scrimpingly, pinchingly, denying themselves pleasures and advantages, not to say necessities. The one escape from such a life is by marriage. A husband may give them the comforts and luxuries for which they sigh, and with this hope in view they are likely to accept any man who offers. As a result we have untrue and unhappy marriages with their endless train of evils — evils which tell strongly upon the characters of the children, and from which, therefore, the whole community must suffer.”

“It will be a gain to the men themselves,” said Allen, “when women shall be more independent of marriage. A gain in this way: Our more independent young woman will be likely to inquire more closely into the character and capacities of a young man before accepting him. She will make higher demands, and he will have to fit himself to meet them. So you see this equality of wages is going to be a good thing all round.”

‘But if young women get too particular,’ said Mr. Johnson, “marriages will become scarce, and the race will die out.”

“Not quite so bad as that, let us hope,” said Eunice; “I think too well of young men to suppose there are not plenty among them good enough for the very best of young women. And as to marriages becoming scarcer, that may not be wholly an evil. Better that they should be few and true than many and false. Better for the world that ten children should be born under right conditions than fifty under wrong conditions.”

“Well,” said Mr. Johnson, “here is another stumbling-block. I don’t bring it forward as an argument, exactly, but as a fact. There are already more than enough workers for the work, and when all the women come pressing into the ranks the state of things will be worse than ever.”

“Or in other words,” said Eunice, “women must refrain from work because there are too many workers. On the same grounds we might ask a certain number of men to remain idle. We might say to them, ‘Don’t you know there are enough already? What are you pressing into the ranks for?’ I don’t see how we can lay down the principle that the number of workers shall be made to

correspond to the amount of work. As a practical measure it would be hard to carry out."

"I think," said Allen, "that this matter should be regulated not by sex, but by ability. Let the best workers have the work and get the best pay. The community can't afford to employ inferior ability when it can be served by superior ability. Neither can individuals afford to. You would not do it yourself, Mr. Johnson. If you wanted a picture painted, or your walls newly papered, or your strawberries gathered, or your apples sorted, or plans drawn for a house, you would employ, other things being equal, the persons who would do your work best, whether men or women. Of two teachers, a man and a woman, you would choose the one who would do the best for your children. In case of sickness in your family, you would not hesitate to send for a woman doctor known to possess great skill, even if a man doctor known to possess little skill were obliged to lose his fee in consequence."

"I don't exactly see, myself," said Mary Ann, "what we shall come to with so many workers."

"Nor I, exactly," said Eunice, "but these things must find their level somehow, and they will, though not by repressing here, and restraining there. Full and free activity for every faculty and

for everybody's faculties is the only fair ground. Let us think it over, logically, as it were, like this. More workers in the field will increase competition. Competition will insure better work. Better work will require more time spent upon it, and, therefore, more workers. Why, this takes us round a circle, and leaves us wanting more workers ! ”

“ Just the situation we desire,” said Miss Hunt.

“ But if ever we do have a great many too many workers for the world's work,” said Miss 'Cindy, “ why, then the world's work can be done in fewer hours to the day than at present, and, glory, hallelujah ! the world will have leisure ! Leisure that everybody is sighing and dying for ! This may not be logical, but it is alluring.”

“ Then there is colonization,” said Allen ; “ the overplus of workers can leave and go where there are fewer. That is logical.”

“ And see if this is not logical,” said Miss Hunt ; “ it may be better, even for the men, that women have equal wages with them, for then employers will not employ women in order to save money. They will employ the best workers of both sexes. This will be bad for inferior workers among women, but we can't help that. Fair play is fair.”

“ The upshot would be,” said Miss 'Cindy,

“more competition, more trying to do good work, and a struggle for perfection. The very best workers would go to the top, and you know Daniel Webster said, ‘There is always room at the top.’ And if it should ever come about that there is no room anywhere but at the top, why, glory, hallelujah! again; everything will be done well!”

“It seems to me,” said Miss Hunt, “that in this matter, as in so many others, we shall have to come down to our old ground of individuality. Let every individual do what is best suited to his or her capacities, providing, of course, that circumstances make this a duty. If a woman inclines strongly to the medical profession, has a real genius for it, and the necessary fortitude and persistency and tenderness, and sense, and insight, and is in every way strong, let her be a physician. The sick need her. But if she thinks of becoming a physician merely because she has a right to be one, or merely to earn money, then let her forbear (the same of men). So of public speaking. If a woman is all alive with a noble purpose, if her mind is brimful of ideas—important ones; if she is keen to discern a truth, and eloquent to expound it, then let her speak out. The public need her. ‘Quench not the spirit.’ But if she cannot

speak to edification, and her only aim is notoriety, then let her forbear (the same of men)."

"In regard to women speaking in public," said Allen, "I never could quite understand the outcry that has been made against this. If the same outcry were made against her singing in public, or acting or reciting in public, then I might understand it. But if one woman may stand up in church and sing, or before a crowd and declaim, or recite, why may not another woman stand up and speak—always supposing she has something important to say and knows how to say it? Why is it any worse to say a thing than to sing it, and why is it any worse for her to speak her own thoughts than other people's?"

"I used to think," said Miss 'Cindy, "that women who spoke in public would be made coarse and brazen and unwomanly by doing so. I have learned better. I have been in their homes, and have seen that they are gentle and tender and womanly. But we are wandering from our subject. Mrs. Johnson, shall we have your word now? I think it was a word for sewing-work."

XXIX.

SEWING-WORK AND OTHER WORK.

“FOR my part,” said Mrs. Chandler, “I don’t like to hear sewing-work and housework cried down. By and by women will be educated into thinking themselves too good for anything but just books and genteel doings.”

“If they are *well* educated,” said Miss Hunt, “that is, truly educated, heart and soul, they will know too much to think themselves above any kind of honest labor. This is a matter which depends upon circumstances. Circumstances must and will alter cases, and you can’t hinder them. A woman may be wisely and nobly employed in doing housework; for housework means work by which the needs of the family are supplied and the home made attractive. But under some circumstances it would be equally wise and noble for the wife and daughters to keep a hired girl while they themselves pursue some employment which brings in

money and is at the same time more agreeable and elevating than housework. The point first to be settled is, Can help be afforded? This depends upon the income of the parties and the uses made of it. If it is barely enough for the absolutely necessary expenses, the path of duty for the woman is plain, and leads straight forward to and through the housework; but if the income be sufficient to afford luxuries—in other words, *goodies*—for the table, and tobacco and cigars for the husband, then this path of duty is not so plain: it is obscured by the question, Would not the money spent for these be better spent in relieving the wife of at least the heaviest parts of in-doors work?”

“Speaking in a general way,” said Mr. Johnson, “I think that this matter of saving women from housework depends a little upon what the saved women do with the time thus gained. They *may* employ it profitably for all concerned, or they *may* employ it in lounging about and reading silly novels, or in nonsensical needlework, or in gadding here and there, talking gossip. We hear now and then of a case in which a hard-working man has to support a lazy and extravagant wife.”

“It is impossible,” said Eunice, “to make any

one statement which will cover the whole ground; still, I think we may lay down this general principle, that it is never the duty of a woman to go beyond her strength in doing unnecessary work, whether sewing, or housework. By the way, Mrs. Johnson had a word to say for sewing-work."

"My word is," said Mrs. Johnson, "that sewing-work must be. Families must have clothes, and in a very great many families the clothes must be home-made."

"The use of machinery is going to affect this matter," said Miss 'Cindy; "a moneyed man builds a big building, fills it with steam-running sewing-machines, hires girls to tend them, and turns off suits, cloaks, wrappers and underclothing, which you can buy for less than the materials would cost you. Think how it is with boys' and men's clothing. Twenty years ago, if your husband wanted a coat made, the tailoress with shears, thimble, wax, and goose, enthroned herself at your most desirable window and held the throne for four days. She had to be engaged long beforehand, and fed and tended during her stay. In a family where men-folks abounded, her half-yearly visitations were appalling to contemplate. Nowadays men-folks get their clothes ready-made, and at less cost.

When women know enough to dress as healthfully as men do their clothing will not fit so snug and tight as it does now, and then it will be a much easier matter to buy it ready-made. Industry is a virtue, but there seems no particular merit in spending whole days in sewing when nothing is gained by it."

"I don't know that there is," said Mrs. Johnson; "I only wanted to speak against the idea that head work is all in all and hand work contemptible. I read in a paper the other day a sentence which seemed so true that I learned it by heart. It was taken from a sermon :

" 'The woman who sits sewing all day long may have served God as well with her needle and ennobled her character as much as though she had been doing some great work.' "

"That is a true saying," said Miss 'Cindy, "but I think there should be a strong accent on the — let me see, one, two, three, four, five, six — on the ninth word, *may*. The woman may have; whether she has or not depends upon her motives. If she was doing needful sewing which circumstances made it necessary for her to do herself, or if she was working for her own support, or the support of those dependent on her, or if she was helping

her brother through college, or if she was sewing as an act of friendship, or charity, then it would be all well enough that she should sit 'sewing all day long.' ”

“Or if she were making anything really beautiful,” said Mary Ann. “I don’t refer now to ‘filling in ’ dogs’ heads and other such on canvas, but embroidering some beautiful pattern on some beautiful material with beautiful colors. Beauty is one kind of necessity, you know.”

“Y-e-s,” said Eunice, hesitatingly, “but I have some doubts on this point. Not on the point of beauty: we must have that; I mean the point of time. I don’t feel quite sure that the best possible way of using our time—that is, of very much time—is to use it in covering with stitches patterns designed by other people. The art once acquired, what comes after is mechanical. There is no farther education to be got from it, no development, no progress.”

“Still, we don’t want to develop and progress and be educated every moment of our lives,” said Miss ‘Cindy.

“True enough,” said Miss Hunt; “and I hereby testify that when the brain is tired with reading or study, sewing-work of almost any kind is a pleasant

relief, and some kinds of embroidery are a delight, especially the nice kinds done in colors."

"We will keep our embroidery for such times," said Mary Ann, "and for times when we should not be doing anything else: odd minutes, you know, and when there is reading aloud or conversation going on; but we won't make it one of the chief aims of life."

"Except towards Christmas," said Miss 'Cindy.

"I think that Mrs. Johnson's sentence should be well considered before we make it a rule of action," said Eunice; "at any rate the emphasis on that ninth word *may* should be very strong indeed. Suppose a woman 'sits sewing all day long' in order to make a grand appearance, or to keep up with the newest fashions, or to wear a finer dress than her neighbor's. Here we should have for motives pride, vanity, conformity and a spirit of rivalry; or if the work is for her children, the same motives would be instilled into them. I think that by such 'sewing all day long' she would neither serve God nor ennoble her character. Also, a woman might choose to 'sit sewing all day long' doing unnecessary sewing, when she was very much lacking in mental culture, or when her children needed her in various ways, or when some

sick or sorrowful person would be the better for her presence. In neither of these cases would she be ‘serving God and ennobling her character.’”

“Speaking of sewing-work,” said Miss Hunt, “what do you think of a handkerchief which took two years in the making; a handkerchief twenty inches square, embroidered with hair and silk in stitches so fine, that unless seen through a powerful magnifying-glass the design seemed to be done in India ink? There were trees and flowers, and a swing and a child, and an angel and an inscription. The margin for the depth of two and a half inches was done in lace work made by threads of the cloth pulled out and twisted together, requiring, the account said, ‘great skill and patience.’ Think of what two years’ skill and patience might have done in other directions; that is, better directions!”

“The handkerchief couldn’t be used for a handkerchief,” said Miss ‘Cindy; “framed and hung up for a picture it would be out of place; laid away in a drawer nobody would see it. Dear me! in these times when there is so much to learn, and so much live work to be done, how can anybody, from choice, spend two years on a pocket handkerchief!”

“There’s a good deal of meaning to those two

words you threw in at the middle — ‘from choice,’” said Eunice; “life has been given various names, as dream, bubble, span, vain show. I think life is a choosing, a balancing. There are so many kinds of duties, so many aims worth keeping in view, that we are compelled to be constantly choosing between them, weighing the advantages of this, that or the other; and as people are not made alike nor situated alike, why, each must choose and weigh for himself, or herself.”

“Individuality again,” said Mary Ann, in parenthesis.

“Sometimes the choice is between lazy dependence and industrious independence,” said Allen, “and *sometimes* the former is preferred.”

“Yes, and especially among women,” said Miss ‘Cindy; “but the time is coming when young women, the same as young men, shall be trained to self-support, and shall think it an honor rather than a disgrace. Then you will see labor looking up, as it were. The stigma will drop off of it: off hand labor as well as off other kinds. When that time comes the prevailing sentiment will be: Any honest work is more honorable than dependence; emphasis on the first word, *any*.”

XXX.

WHO SHALL DECIDE?

UPON hearing it remarked that there are other than the natural inequalities between men and women, Mr. Johnson said he would like to hear them mentioned.

"Yes, ladies," said Allen, laughing, "now is your opportunity. Just state your case, and we men will listen patiently and decide justly."

"Your very proposition suggests one of the inequalities," said Miss Hunt. "To say we will decide is as much as to say we have the right to decide. Equals do not decide for equals; yet many questions affecting woman's interests are decided by this same we — that is to say, by men."

"That's what's the matter with the whole matter," said Miss 'Cindy. "There's too much we for the you."

"Let us suppose a case," said Miss Hunt. "Suppose two persons, James and John, are travelling

together. Says James to John, as they pursue their journey: 'That is not the path for you to take. That stream is too deep for you to ford. Those plums will make you sick. It will be best for you not to step over this fence. It is wrong for you to cross that meadow. You cannot climb that hill. I advise you not to enter that building. You will be afraid of the dog; besides, it contains nothing which you need.'

"Now, the very fact that James assumes such directorship implies that James thinks himself a better judge than John of John's duties and capacities and needs.

"Should James not only advise and direct, but urge his own preferences, and say: 'I prefer that you conduct in such and such a manner. I like to see you in this place, and I don't like to see you in that place. You will please me better by doing thus than by doing so.' This would imply that James's wishes and preferences were to be consulted, rather than John's. If James should go a step further, and use authority, declaring to John, 'You shall not take that path; you shall not ford that stream; you shall not eat those plums,' and so forth, this would imply on James's part a right of control over John.

“James in this parable represents the aforesaid ‘we,’ which is to say man; and John represents the aforesaid ‘you,’ which is to say woman. Says man to woman: ‘I advise you not to attempt such and such studies. Your brain is unequal to this or that effort; besides, the knowledge gained would do you no good. It is unwomanly and improper for you to speak in public, and to speak from a pulpit to a congregation on Sunday is wrong. Neither is it well for you to enter upon the study of medicine. There are terrible difficulties in the way here. It is much more fitting that we should be the physicians; not only among our own sex, but among yours. It is not necessary that you should have any voice in certain matters of common interest to us both—as, for instance, the management of the schools your children attend, choice of teachers and committees, course of studies, condition of school-buildings; or in the appropriation of the taxes you pay on your property; or in making the laws by which you are governed. We can manage all these things for you. Should you take interest in such matters, you would lose your womanly natures. You would cease to care for your children.’

“Now, the very fact that man assumes such

directorship implies that man is a better judge than woman of woman's needs and duties and capacities; a better judge than woman of what is womanly.

"In the parable James does more than merely to advise and direct; he makes known his pleasure. So does the 'we' in the reality. Man says: 'We don't want you thus; but so. We don't want to see you on the platform, or in the pulpit, or at the ballot-box, or prescribing for the sick. We don't want learned women. We want sweet, yielding, clinging, depending women; women with no strong points of character to protrude and irritate us. These are the kind to make us happy.' All this implies that, in the ordering of woman's life, man's pleasure and preferences are to be consulted, rather than her own.

"In the parable James goes a step further, and uses authority. So does the 'we' in the reality. Man says to woman: 'You shall not do thus; but so. You shall not enter that college; you shall not become members of that medical institution; you shall not speak in that pulpit or at that convention; you shall not have a voice in making the laws which govern you, or in the appropriation of your tax-money, or in choosing your pastor, or in

the management of the schools your children attend, or in any matters of common or public interest.' This exercise of authority implies on man's part a right of control over woman."

"But almost all the women would agree with the men," said Mrs. Johnson. "They don't want to do these forbidden things; they don't think it proper or right to do them. They don't want the bother of laws, and of school-matters, and of knowing how their tax-money is spent. They like to be looked out for and taken care of, and they feel willing to trust men to manage all such matters for them."

"That is not the point in question," said Miss Hunt. "Our point is inequality. This point has been doubted. But if one person assumes the directorship of another person, there certainly is inequality implied between the two and a superiority on the part of the director."

"Now I will speak a parable," said Miss 'Cindy, "Mrs. Johnson, suppose you should put on your things and walk out of your front door, and that Mrs. Chandler should meet you and say: 'Mrs. Johnson, this is the road you ought to take. It leads to Hepton Corners. That road leads to Overton. You are not fit to go to Overton. You don't

feel strong enough, your shoes pinch your feet, and you can't see very well with one of your eyes, and you have a buzzing sound in your ears, and your shawl ought to have more blue in it. The things you will get at Overton are not good for you. The things you will get at Hepton Corners are good for you. It is improper and wrong for you to go to Overton; your duty calls you to Hepton Corners. Furthermore, I don't like to think of you at Overton. I like to think of you at Hepton Corners. You will not make me nearly as happy by going to Overton as you will by going to Hepton Corners. Furthermore, again, you shall do as I say. You shall not go to Overton.'

"Your natural reply would be: 'Mrs. Chandler, I must judge for myself what is right and proper and where my duty leads me. Certainly I know better than you what my strength will allow, and whether or not my shoes pinch my feet, or I can see with both eyes, or have a buzzing sound in my ears. I don't quite see why your taste should decide the color of my shawl, or why your preferences should regulate my movements; and as for detaining me by force, the idea is absurd. In fact, your whole talk to me is absurd.'

"You see here that the question what was your

duty, or what were your wishes, has nothing to do with the point under consideration. It might not have been your duty to go to Overton; you might have had no desire to go there. The point is that Mrs. Chandler should assume to know your duty, and needs, and capabilities better than you know them yourself; should expect you to yield your preferences to hers, and even to submit to her authority. You two being on an equality, her assumptions and expectations would appear to you absurd. If we suppose you to be very much underwitted and destitute of moral perception, and Mrs. Chandler to be very much overwitted and unerring in moral perception, the absurdity vanishes."

"Just so in our case," said Miss Hunt. "Supposing woman to be equal with man — equal, that is, in judgment, in intelligence, in moral perception; it is absurd for him to expect that her course should be shaped by his opinions, his preferences, or his authority, any more than that his course should be shaped by her opinions, preferences and authority. If we suppose woman to be very much underwitted and destitute of moral perception, and man to be very much overwitted and unerring in moral perception, the absurdity vanishes. But are

we ready to admit that such is the case? Are you willing to, yourself, Mrs. Johnson?"

"Of course, I am not!" said Mrs. Johnson.

"Are you willing to admit that women, as a class, are naturally inferior to men, as a class, in intelligence, judgment, common sense, and moral sense?"

"No, I am not."

"Is it not likely that a woman should know, at least, as well as a man what is right, what is proper, what is womanly, what she needs, and what she can probably accomplish?"

"I suppose so."

"Then why should she be under his direction in these matters? Remember, again, that the question (Is it right for women to do all these forbidden things, as you call them?) is not our question. I, you, all of us women may shrink from doing them, may detest it, scorn it. But our one sole, single point is that man, not being woman's superior in judgment, intelligence, and moral sense, decides what is right and proper for her to do, expects her to be guided by his preferences, and compels her to submit to his decisions.

"The true way is for man and woman to stand equals, on the common ground of humanity —

equally free to decide and to act ; equally free to develop his or her own faculties ; equally free from arbitrary restrictions.

“And by the way this simple point that the moral right of individual expression is common to all settles the question of woman suffrage. The real question is not Shall women vote, but Who is to decide whether she shall or not? At present man has the legal right of decision, but this legal right is based on a moral wrong.”

XXXI.

LUCINDA'S LETTER.

“WE admit,” said Mr. Chandler, “that man does, in many cases, decide what is and what is not woman’s duty, and does oblige her to submit to his decisions; but is there not a propriety in his doing so? Is this not authorized by several texts of Scripture?”

“Yes, it is,” said Miss Hunt, the school-teacher; “and one reason why I wish to hear the whole matter discussed is that my attention has just been called to these texts by a letter from a pupil friend of mine, lately married to a young city book-keeper. I began school-teaching in an out-of-the-way village in New Hampshire, and among the scholars attending was one of twelve or thirteen, named Lucinda; a heavy, thick-set girl, somewhat clumsy in her motions, and often abrupt in speech. Her face was round and rosy, and it had honesty written all over it. I was drawn to her at first by this truthful-

ness of countenance; and still more afterward by her truthfulness of character and her affectionate disposition. I never knew a person so utterly conscientious. In bringing in her school-reports, she exacted from herself the strictest integrity, and by no means allowed herself the benefit of a doubt. One afternoon, as was often the case — for Lucinda, with all her earnest endeavors, could not become a scholar — she missed many times in her geography, and I left her to study after school, telling her that when she had tried as hard as she possibly could she might go, even if the lesson were not perfectly learned. Just before dark, finding the key had not been brought, I went over to the schoolhouse, stepped softly to the door, and looked in. There sat Lucinda, her head bent down to the book, one hand covering the answers, ‘weaving’ backward and forward in her seat, as if to make her body help her mind to do its work.

“‘O Miss Hunt!’ she said in a pitiful tone, as I entered. ‘I tried hard; but I don’t believe I tried as hard as I could, For I watched the flies some when I thought I was studying; and when I was telling the square miles, I kept thinking about Ma’s getting supper and the baby trying to turn over flapjacks with a clothes-pin, as he did one

time, and —' Here she burst into a giggle, which soon turned into a cry. And I kissed her, and stroked her hair, and sent her home."

This is her letter:

"MY DEAR TEACHER:

"I want to ask you about something that I can't make up my mind which is the right side of it and which is the wrong. I think it is wicked to go out walking in the woods and fields Sunday afternoons. I was brought up so. But Augustus, he doesn't think it is wicked. And he says he is shut up so much that he needs to go, and that he can keep the day among God's works better than among man's works; and he wants me to go with him. Now, he couldn't take so much comfort going alone, and, if anybody goes with him, I'd rather go with him myself than anybody else should go. But then I do not think it is right to go. I wasn't brought up that way. Last Sunday Augustus asked me if I did not think it was right to follow what the Bible laid down. And I said: 'Why, yes, indeed; for the Bible was given us for a guide.' 'Well,' says he, 'the Bible says that wives must do as their husbands want them to; and I want you to go, and so it is right for you to go.'

“Then he got his father’s Scott’s Bible, because that has a great many notes of explanation in it; and read to me first from I Peter, ‘Wives, be in subjection to your husbands’; then from Ephesians, ‘Let wives be subject to their husbands in everything’; then from Timothy, ‘Let the women hear in silence, with all subjection’; then from Corinthians, ‘The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man.’ ‘Now these sayings are easy to understand,’ said Augustus, ‘and are said over and over so many times they must mean what they say; and, don’t you see, the responsibility is taken off your shoulders?’

“I did not know just what to say to him, because there it was in plain Bible words, ‘Submit in everything, as unto the Lord’; but I said it did not seem reasonable. He said that reason was one thing and revelation was another, and that we must not oppose reason to revelation. ‘Mr. Scott was a pious man and a learned man,’ said he, ‘and it looks likely that he had as much reason as most folks; and he says, in a note here, ‘Man is the immediate Head or Ruler of every woman, to whose authority God . . . subjected her’; and he says, ‘In general, it is beneficial to women to be subject to their husbands.’ And do you mean to

set yourself above Mr. Scott, and above Paul?' Augustus asked.

"I told him I would think the matter over in my mind. And it happened that our minister called to see me that week, and, after he had talked some, I asked him if we must take the Bible commands to mean, word for word, just what they said. And he said: 'Certainly.' And then I told him what Augustus wanted me to do, and that I thought it would be wicked to do that way Sundays. And he said, right off: 'My dear, we have to use reason in regard to these matters, and —' I'm afraid I wasn't very polite; for I spoke right out before he'd done, and said I: 'Can we? I didn't know we could. Can *all* of us? Can *women*?' 'Certainly,' said he again. 'And when you interrupted me I was about to say that, whenever a husband's wishes conflict with the voice of conscience, the voice of conscience must be obeyed.' 'The voice of a woman's conscience?' said I. 'Certainly,' said he. 'Woman is an accountable being.' 'Then what Paul meant was,' said I: 'Wives, be subject unto your husbands when you think it is right to be.' 'Certainly,' said he. 'Conscience is supreme.'

"But when I told Augustus this, he said he

didn't see what right any human man had to add what Paul did not say. Said he: 'Paul took pains to say these things at a great many different times (so there was chance enough); but he never at any of the times brought it in that woman must follow her conscience, or her reason either. If the minister thinks women ought to follow their reasons and their consciences, why didn't he let that Mrs. Orton, who is getting up a revival, preach in the meeting-house, when she said she felt it to be her duty to and that her soul burned within her to proclaim glad tidings? But he said no!'

"I couldn't say this was not so; and the next time the minister called, after we had talked some about the revival and about Mrs. Orton, I said that some of us wanted her to preach in the meeting-house. 'Yes,' said he, 'but I felt it my duty to withhold my consent. The Bible is very clear on this point. Paul says: 'Let your women keep silence in the church.' I said: 'You said, the other day, that all of us — women and all — must follow our reasons and our consciences. Augustus says he doesn't understand, and I don't either, why they must do so at some times and not do so at other times.' He said: 'My dear, some parts of the Bible are hard to reconcile. We see

now as in a glass darkly. We must walk by faith, and not by sight. Those who know best about these matters think it is not right for a woman to preach in a church; and you must have faith in their judgment.' So I told Augustus that the minister said that we must settle our duty for ourselves sometimes, and sometimes not. Augustus says this seems unlikely; and I think myself that it does seem unlikely.

"Ruthy Taylor—she's one of the young converts—she wants to follow the Bible very strictly, and she asked me if I thought she ought to wear her gold chain and locket her uncle gave her; for she said that Paul forbids women to wear such things, and she wished she knew what to do about it. She said that Paul said that, if a woman wanted to know anything, let her ask her husband at home; but she hadn't any husband to ask about the chain and locket. We looked to see if Mr. Scott said anything about this, and found that he said that the command to ask husbands might take in unmarried women; for, as he said in one of his notes, they would have some man in the family of whom they might inquire. Ruthy is very much puzzled to know what is right to do. She wants to do exactly as the Bible says, and it says we

must inquire of the men when we don't know. Now, Ruthy's brother is a man; but all he thinks of is going a-gunning, and hardly ever looks into any book, let alone the Bible, and Ruthy says she knows he wouldn't know anything about wearing pearls and costly array. Mr. Scott said in a note that the rule against doing so might admit of occasional exceptions; but Augustus says he thinks this is leaving a very wide door open, for a great many women will think they are occasional exceptions and will walk right through. I told Ruthy that the minister said we must all use our reasons and consciences, even women; but Augustus wants to know, and Ruthy wants to, too, if Paul meant that women should do so sometimes, why didn't he say at which times? He says that in the commands there isn't even one small crack open for a woman's reason and conscience; that her subjection must be 'in everything'!

"I wish you would write me a letter, and tell me what you think about these texts, and especially about the one which forbids women to speak in churches, and why this should be followed always and those others not always."

XXXII.

MISS HUNT'S LETTER TO LUCINDA.

MY DEAR LUCINDA :

YOU ask what I think about the texts of Scripture which would place women under subjection to men, "and especially about that one which forbids women to speak in churches."

In such matters we naturally look for guidance to our religious teachers and members of religious bodies. There is something curious in the way these seem to regard the particular text you speak of. The same Paul who forbids women to speak in the church said: "I suffer not a woman to teach." Yet religious people employ women teachers. The text may be said to mean that women must not teach adults, especially adult men. But, even thus explained, it is set aside by prominent religious leaders, who, in conducting evening schools for adults of both sexes, include women among the teachers. They would smile at the idea of taking

the text literally. Your own minister, if wishing information on some point in astronomy, would think it right to ask it of Maria Mitchell. He would not ask it of you ; and, if his question related to zoölogy, he would not probably put it to Maria Mitchell. The accepted meaning of this text seems to be, then, that woman must not teach unless she is better informed than those to be taught.

We find other texts of Scripture which are not taken literally by religious leaders. Paul said, "Owe no man anything." Not many, even of the stricter sort, obey this to the letter and invariably pay at the time of buying.

Then there are the texts : "The powers that be are ordained of God. Whoever resisteth the powers shall receive unto themselves damnation." This is plain language ; yet those who insist most earnestly on a literal interpretation of Scripture would not think it right to sin in obedience to the powers that be. The accepted meaning of this text is : Obey the powers that be when their commands do not conflict with the voice of conscience.

"Sell all that ye have and give alms" is a plain command. For everybody to follow it is impossible, since, if property is sold, somebody must buy ;

and for any head of a family to "sell all" for the purpose mentioned would be unjust to that family.

"Give to every one that asketh" is another plain command; but we all know that indiscriminate charity injures many who receive it. I suppose a millionaire could hardly do a worse thing for a place than to proclaim there "I will give to every man that asketh"; thus taking away that necessity of exertion which is what develops the powers of a man and, in fact, makes a man of him. The conductors of charitable organizations — most of whom are religious people — beseech us not to "give to every man that asketh." They tell us that many of these askers are lazy, unthrifty, improvident, determined to live in idle dependence. They say that, so long as people do "give to every man that asketh," so long will pauperism increase and laziness find support. The best and wisest in the land practice this text as if it were written: "Do not give to every man that asketh."

"Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." But religious people do not hesitate to insist upon the restoration of goods of which they have been unjustly deprived. Their usual interpretation of the text seems to be: "If any man

taketh away thy goods, compel him to restore them and punish him for taking them."

"Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, nor for your body what ye shall put on." The much-abused tramps are about the only ones among us who follow this command to the letter. Pious men, church members, ministers do "take thought" for these things, and seek salaries which will prevent a lack of them. Some say the command means "take no anxious thought"; but if your minister were deprived of his parish, he could hardly help taking anxious thought for the feeding and clothing of his family, and in these times of failures and shrinkages and embezzlements almost any persons having families depending upon them must sometimes take thought and anxious thought.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." Do you know any religious persons who obey this rule? Do you know any religious shopkeeper who asks his customers to trade at the shop over the way, rather than at his own? Any religious shoemaker who entreats people to get their shoes at another's shoe-store? Any religious merchant who hastens to tell his fellow-merchants the secret news he has received of a rise

in the price of goods? Any religious lawyers and physicians who, in obedience to the command, turn over their clients or their patients to some other practitioners? Any clergyman who, in want of a parish himself, recommends for a desirable situation some other candidate? The usual following of this text is :

“Let no man seek another’s, but every man his own wealth.”

We find no rule more forcibly enjoined than that of the subjection of wives to husbands. The command in regard to this is given over and over and over, and always clearly. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands in everything.” “Submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord.” “As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.” Plain, forcible, comprehensive; yet your minister told you that these commands are never to be followed when such following is disapproved by your conscience.

But, although these and many other texts may, it seems, be interpreted by the light of reason and conscience, and are not to be taken literally, there is one text which we are told must be taken literally and literally practiced: “Let your women

keep silence in the church, for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

I think no person has ever told us why this text is to have a literal rendering and those others not; but the distinction is made. The same men who invite "a woman to teach" in adult schools of both sexes; who always ask their wives at home, before taking an important step; who would resist "the powers that be," if ordered by them to commit a sin; who seek their "own wealth," and not "another's"; who hold fast by "all that they have" and try to get more; who sue at law the person who "taketh away [their] goods," and seldom give to any "man that asketh"; and take so much thought for their lives as to make the accumulation of property an absorbing aim; who "owe" many men and pay reluctantly; who would blame the woman who obeyed her husband to do wickedly — these same men, having walked straight through, or gone around, or jumped over the texts quoted, find their way completely blocked by this one of Corinthians xiv. 34, and say: "Now, here is something which can neither be walked through, nor gone around, nor jumped over. "Let your women keep silence in the church." This means exactly what it says, and must be followed accordingly.

If a woman should ask, Why must this be taken literally, and those not? they can offer no other reason than because we think so. If the woman says, My reason and conscience do not tell me to interpret and follow this text literally, they answer, virtually:

Your reason and conscience can guide you in the interpretation of any other text; but here you must lay these aside and be guided by ours. We think this text should be interpreted literally, and you must accept our opinion. If she asks, Why should I accept your opinion? the answer can only be: Because we think that in this case you ought to. If asked, Why must we do in this case as you think we ought to? the answer can only be: Because we think that in this case you ought to do as we think you ought to. They can bring no higher authority, for they have already allowed that the texts making woman subject to men are not to be followed when her conscience tells her otherwise.

I ought to say here that I have myself no desire to speak in the church, or in any public place — I should shrink from doing so; but I do like people to be sensible and logical; and there is neither sense nor logic in insisting that one Scripture command

shall be followed literally, while allowing that many others are not to be.

A curious part of this matter is that the command thus insisted on is one with which man has nothing to do. There is no call for his interference. The word "let" is used here in a general sense, as in many other cases: "Let him that is on the housetop not come down"; "Let him that thirsteth come." The command concerns women only, and its interpretation rests with her. Why should man step in between her and her Creator? or even between her and Paul? Surely, if her own reason and conscience may be trusted as guides in the many trying exigencies of life, they may also be trusted here; or did the Almighty make woman capable of comprehending every text of Scripture save this particular one? And, if so, where is it indicated that here man's comprehension shall supply the deficiency?

Another curious part of the matter is that Paul himself directed how a woman should speak in the church; or, rather, how she should not—namely, "with her head uncovered." The word used is "prophesy." But "prophesy" here does not mean foretelling, but speaking from inspiration. "He that prophesieth edifieth the Church."

Your minister spoke truly. In questions of right or wrong, every human being should decide for himself or herself what is duty. A woman may be willing that a man should decide for her; may prefer that he should; may insist that he should; but when it comes to authority, that of her own reason and conscience is supreme.

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